

Common Ground

Democracy Begins at Home

Langston Hughes · Lillian Smith · Thomas Sancton

TOPSOIL AND BIBLES Paul B. Sears

THE CASE OF JACOB GOLDSTEIN Marie Syrkin

WIMMIN IN BRITCHES Jean Thomas

AN ANCIENT DEMOCRACY TO A MODERN
Mary Ellen Chase

DEMOCRACY IN RELOCATION Dillon Myer

THOSE OF GERMAN DESCENT George N. Shuster

and others

50c.

WINTER 1943

SPECIAL

Christmas Gift Offer

Good until January 15

Make Your Christmas Gifts This Year a Statement
of Democratic Faith. Send COMMON GROUND
at our Special Holiday Rate

Two Subscriptions (Regularly \$2 Each) for
\$3.50

Additional Subscriptions for \$1.50 Each

Your own renewal may be counted as one subscription.



Use the attached card to enter your gift subscriptions *now*. Copies of the Winter issue will reach the recipient a few days before Christmas, with an attractive card announcing your gift.

You need send no money. We'll bill you after the holidays.

COMMON GROUND. Published quarterly: September, December, March, June, by Common Council for American Unity. \$2.00 a year; 50 cents a copy. Copyright 1942, by Common Council for American Unity, Incorporated. Printed at the Princeton University Press. Editorial and publication office, 222 Fourth Avenue, New York, New York. Manuscripts must be accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes. Entered as second-class matter September 15, 1940, at the post office at New York, New York, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

CONTENTS

TITLE	AUTHOR	PAGE
DEMOCRACY BEGINS AT HOME:		
WHAT SHALL WE DO ABOUT THE SOUTH?	Langston Hughes	3
DEMOCRACY WAS NOT A CANDIDATE	Lillian E. Smith	7
A LETTER HOME	Dorothy Kissling	11
THE SOUTH NEEDS HELP	Thomas Sancton	12
WIMMIN IN BRITCHES	Jean Thomas	17
THE CASE OF JACOB GOLDSTEIN	Marie Syrkin	25
THOSE OF GERMAN DESCENT	George N. Shuster	31
HANS AND MAGDA MEET THE WAR	Barbara Parmelee	36
DEMOCRACY IN RELOCATION	Dillon Myer	43
WHEN THE ALIENS LEFT	Ernest L. Meyer	48
TOPSOIL AND BIBLES	Paul B. Sears	50
AMERICAN FARMERS	Photographs	57
AN ANCIENT DEMOCRACY TO A MODERN	Mary Ellen Chase	65
ME DO IT!	Leta Browne	72
A LETTER TO GIULIO	Alfredo C. Camerini	77
SECTION BOSS	Marguerite Deti Lathrop	80
A SPECIAL STAKE IN THE WAR	Arnold Mulder	86
SHIPMENT	George Morimitsu	89
TWO WORLDS	Edward Urban	91
IN THE "MELTING POT"	Elfreda Nordell	95
MY NAME WAS VINIA	Marguerita Rudolph	101
SINCERELY YOURS	Letters to Louis Adamic	104
LANGUAGE TEACHING AND THE HIGH SCHOOLS	M. Margaret Anderson	110

DEPARTMENTS

News Notes, 107	From the Immigrant and Negro Press, 113
Schools and Teachers, 110	
The Bookshelf, conducted by Henry C. Tracy, 115	

M. MARGARET ANDERSON
Editor

DAVID DEMPSEY
Circulation Manager

FRANK MLAKAR
Assistant Editor
In the armed forces

ALEXANDER ALLAND
Photo Editor

ADVISORY EDITORIAL BOARD

LOUIS ADAMIC
VAN WYCK BROOKS
PEARL BUCK

MARY ELLEN CHASE
LANGSTON HUGHES

ALVIN JOHNSON
THOMAS MANN
LIN YUTANG

COMMON GROUND is published by the COMMON COUNCIL FOR AMERICAN UNITY, 222 Fourth Avenue, New York City, as one part of its program to accomplish the following purposes:

To help create among the American people the unity and mutual understanding resulting from a common citizenship, a common belief in democracy and the ideals of liberty, the placing of the common good before the interests of any group, and the acceptance, in fact as well as in law, of all citizens, whatever their national or racial origins, as equal partners in American society.

To further an appreciation of what each group has contributed to America, to uphold the freedom to be different, and to encourage the growth of an American culture which will be truly representative of all the elements that make up the American people.

To overcome intolerance and discrimination because of foreign birth or descent, race or nationality.

To help the foreign-born and their children solve their special problems of adjustment, know and value their particular cultural heritage, and share fully and constructively in American life.

The work of the Council is supported by memberships and contributions: Subscribing Membership, \$3; Participating, \$5; Co-operating, \$10; Contributing, \$25; Supporting, \$50; Sustaining, \$100 and over. All memberships include subscription to COMMON GROUND. Subscription to COMMON GROUND alone is \$2.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Nicholas Kelley, *Chairman*; John Palmer Gavit, Will Irwin, *Vice-Chairmen*; Eliot D. Pratt, *Treasurer*; Louis Adamic, Sigurd J. Arnesen, Edward Fisher Brown, Allen T. Burns, Fred M. Butzel, Mrs. Thomas Capek, Elizabeth Eastman, Sylvan Gotshal, Earl G. Harrison, James L. Houghteling, Mrs. James A. Kennedy, Robert D. Kohn, Frank J. Lausche, Read Lewis, Mrs. Jacob A. Riis, Josephine Roche, Mrs. DeWitt Stetten, Ida M. Tarbell, and M. F. Wegrzynek.

Read Lewis, *Executive Director*

Marian Schibsy, *Associate Director*



DEMOCRACY BEGINS AT HOME

WHAT SHALL WE DO ABOUT THE SOUTH?

LANGSTON HUGHES

FOR a New Yorker of color, the South begins at Newark. A half hour by tube from the Hudson Terminal and one comes across street-corner hamburger stands that will not serve a hamburger to a Negro customer wishing to sit on a stool. For the same dime a white pays, a Negro must take his hamburger elsewhere in a paper bag and eat it, minus a plate, a napkin, and a glass of water. Jim Crow always means less for the one Jim Crowed and an unequal value for his money—no stool, no shelter, merely the hamburger, in Newark.

As the colored traveler goes further south by train, Jim Crow increases. Philadelphia is ninety minutes from Manhattan. There the all-colored grammar school begins, the separate education of the races that Talmadge of Georgia so highly approves. An hour or so further down the line is Baltimore, where segregation laws are written in the state and city codes. Another hour by train, Washington. There the conductor tells the Negro traveler to go into the Jim Crow coach behind the engine, usually half a baggage car, next to trunks and dogs.

That this change to complete Jim Crow happens at Washington is highly significant of the state of American democracy in relation to colored peoples today.

Washington, as the capital of this nation, is one of the great centers of the Allied war effort toward the achievement of the Four Freedoms. Yet to a South-bound Negro citizen told at Washington to change into a segregated coach, the Four Freedoms have a hollow sound, like distant lies not meant to be the truth in the land of the Jim Crow car.

The train crosses the Potomac into Virginia, and from there on throughout the South life for the Negro, by state law and custom, is a hamburger in a sack without a plate, water, napkin, or stool—but at the same price as the whites pay—to be eaten apart from the others without shelter. The Negro can do little about this because the law is against him, he has no vote, the police are brutal, and the citizens think it is as it should be. For his seat in the half-coach of the crowded Jim Crow car, a colored man must pay the same fare as those who ride in the air-cooled coaches further back and are privileged to use the diner when they wish. For his hamburger in a sack served without courtesy the southern Negro must pay taxes but refrain from going to the polls, must patriotically accept conscription to work, fight, and perhaps die to regain or maintain freedom for people off in Europe or Australia when

COMMON GROUND

he hasn't it himself at home. To his ears most of the war speeches about freedom sound perfectly foolish, unreal, high-flown, and false. To many southern whites, too, it must all seem like play-acting—the grand talk so nobly delivered, so poorly executed.

Liberals and persons of good will, North and South, including, no doubt, our President himself, are puzzled as to what on earth to do about the South—the poll tax South, the Jim Crow South—that so effectively and openly gives the lie to democracy. With the brazen frankness of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, Dixie speaks through Talmadge, Rankin, Dixon, Arnall, and Mark Ethridge.

In a public speech in Birmingham, Mr. Ethridge said, "All the armies of the world, both of the United States and the Axis, could not force upon the South an abandonment of racial segregation." Governor Dixon of Alabama refused a government war contract offered Alabama State Prison because it contained an anti-discrimination clause which in his eyes was an "attempt to abolish segregation of races in the South. . . . We will not place ourselves in a position to be attacked by those who seek to foster their own pet social reforms," said he. In other words, Alabama will not reform. It is as bull-headed as England in India, and its Governor is not ashamed to say so.

As a proof of southern intolerance, almost daily the press reports some new occurrence of physical brutality against Negroes. Governor Talmadge was "too busy" to investigate when Roland Hayes and his wife were thrown into jail and the great tenor beaten on complaint of a shoe salesman over a dispute as to what seat in his shop a Negro should occupy when buying shoes. Nor did the Governor of Mississippi bother when Hugh Gloster, professor of English at Morehouse College, riding as an inter-

state passenger, was illegally ejected from a train in his state, beaten, arrested, and fined because, being in an overcrowded Jim Crow coach, he asked for a seat in an adjacent car which contained only two white passengers. Legally, the Jim Crow laws do not apply to interstate travelers but the FBI has not yet got around to enforcing that Supreme Court ruling. Recently, en route from San Francisco to Oklahoma City, Fred Wright, a county probation officer of color, was beaten and forced into the Texas Jim Crow coach on a transcontinental train by order of the conductor, in defiance of federal law. A seventy-six-year-old clergyman, Dr. Jackson of Hartford, Connecticut, going into the South for the National Baptist Convention in September, was set upon by white passengers for merely passing through a white coach on the way to his own seat. There have been similar attacks upon colored soldiers in uniform on public carriers. One such attack resulted in death for the soldier, dragged from a bus and killed by civilian police. Every day now, Negro soldiers from the North, returning home on furlough from southern camps, report incident after incident of humiliating travel treatment below the Mason-Dixon line.

It seems obvious that the South does not yet know what this war is about.

As answer Number One to the question "What Shall We Do About the South?" I would suggest an immediate and intensive federally directed program of pro-democratic education, to be put into all schools of the South from the first grade to the universities. As a part of the war effort, this is urgently needed. The Spanish Loyalist Government had trench schools for its soldiers and night schools for civilians even in Madrid under siege. We are not yet under siege. We still have time (but not too much) to teach our people what we are fighting

WHAT SHALL WE DO ABOUT THE SOUTH?

for, and to begin to apply these teachings to race relations at home. You see, it would be too bad for an emissary of color from one of the Latin American countries, say Cuba or Brazil, to arrive at Miami Airport and board a train for Washington, only to get beaten up and thrown off by white Southerners who do not yet realize how many colored allies we have—nor how badly we need them—and that it is inconsiderate and impolite to beat colored people, anyway. Education as to the real meaning of this war might help the South a little in this respect.

Because transportation is so symbolic of the whole racial problem in the South, the Number Two thing for us to do is evolve a way out of the Jim Crow car dilemma at once. Would a system of first, second, and third class coaches help? In Europe, formerly, if one did not wish to ride with peasants and tradespeople, one could pay a little more and solve that problem by having a first class coach almost entirely to himself. Most Negroes can hardly afford parlor car seats. Why not abolish Jim Crow entirely and let the whites who wish to do so ride in coaches where few Negroes have the funds to be? In any case, our Chinese, Latin American, and Russian allies are not going to think any too much of our democratic pronouncements as long as we keep compulsory Jim Crow cars on southern rails.

Since most people learn a little through education, albeit slowly, as Number Three I would suggest that the government draft all the leading Negro intellectuals, sociologists, writers, and concert singers, from Alain Locke of Oxford and W. E. B. DuBois of Harvard to Dorothy Maynor and Paul Robeson of Carnegie Hall, and send them into the South to appear before white audiences, carrying messages of culture and democracy, thus offsetting the old stereotypes of the southern mind and the Hollywood movie, and explain-

ing to the people, without dialect, what the war aims are about. With each, send on tour a liberal white Southerner like Paul Green, Erskine Caldwell, Pearl Buck, or William Seabrook. And, of course, include soldiers to protect them.

Number Four, as to the Army—draftees are in sore need of education on how to behave toward darker peoples. Just as a set of government suggestions has lately been issued to our soldiers on how to act in England, so a similar set should be given them on how to act in Alabama, Georgia, Texas, India, China, Africa, Brazil—wherever there are colored peoples. Not only printed words, but intensive training in the reasons for being decent to everybody. Classes in democracy and the war aims should be set up in every training camp in America and every unit of our military forces already abroad. These forces should be armed with understanding as well as armament.

I go on the premise that Southerners are reasonable people, but that they just simply do not know nowadays what they are doing, nor how bad their racial attitudes look to the rest of the civilized world. I know their politicians, their schools, and the Hollywood movies have done their best to uphold prevailing reactionary viewpoints. Heretofore nobody in America, really, except a few radicals, liberals, and a handful of true religionists, have cared much about either the Negroes or the South. Their sincere efforts to effect a change have been but a drop in a muddy bucket.

Basically, of course, the South needs universal suffrage, economic stabilization, a balanced diet, vitamins for children. But until those things are achieved, a few mild but helpful steps might be taken on a lesser front, to ameliorate—not solve—the Negro problem.

COMMON GROUND

It might be pointed out to the South, for instance, that the old bugaboo of sex and social equality doesn't mean a thing. Nobody as a rule sleeps with or eats with or dances with or marries anybody else except by mutual consent. Millions of people in New York, Chicago, and Seattle go to the same polls and vote without ever cohabiting together. Why does the South think it would be otherwise with Negroes were they permitted to vote there? Or have a decent education? Or sit on a stool in a public place and eat a hamburger? Why they think simple civil rights would force a Southerner's daughter to marry a Negro in spite of herself, I have never been able to understand. It must be due to some lack somewhere in their schooling.

A federally sponsored educational program of racial decency could, furthermore, point out to its students that co-operation in labor would be to the advantage of all—rather than to the disadvantage of anyone, white or black. It could show quite clearly that a million unused colored hands barred from war industries might mean a million weapons lacking in the hands of our soldiers on some foreign front—and a million extra deaths—including southern white boys needlessly dying under Axis fire—because Governor Dixon of Alabama and others of like mentality need a little education. It might

also be pointed out that when peace comes and the Southerners go to the peace table, if they take there with them the traditional Dixie racial attitudes, there is no possible way for them to aid in forming any peace at all that will last. China, India, Brazil and Free French Africa, Soviet Asia, and the whole Middle East will not believe a word they say.

Peace only to breed other wars is a sorry peace, one we must plan now to avoid. Not only in order to win the war but to create a peace along decent lines, we had best start now to educate the South. That education can not be left to well-meaning but numerically weak civilian organizations. Government itself should take over—and vigorously. After all, Washington is the place where the conductor comes through every South-bound train and says, "Colored people, change to the Jim Crow car ahead."

That car, in these days and times, has no business being "ahead." War's freedom train can hardly trail along with glory behind a Jim Crow coach. No matter how streamlined the other cars may be, that coach endangers all humanity's hopes for a peaceful tomorrow.

Langston Hughes, well-known poet and playwright, is on the advisory editorial board of COMMON GROUND.

DEMOCRACY WAS NOT A CANDIDATE

LILLIAN E. SMITH

ON September 11, in Georgia's white primary, Governor Gene Talmadge lost his fourth term to young Ellis Arnall. It was so close a race that for a day or two Talmadge would not concede Arnall's victory but instead hinted a coup d'etat whereby certain delegates from Arnall counties would vote at the Democratic State Convention with the Talmadge crowd. It was pure Talmadge mellerdrammer but a trick so possible in the current state of gentlemen and their politics in Georgia that the hint must have brought sweat to young Arnall's brow. But Talmadge's palace guard advised against it, probably reminding Gene that, in addition to practical difficulties, such an attempt would so harm the prestige of the white primary that more dangerous ideas might enter heads already filling with the dangerous idea of abolishing the poll tax.

There was no coup. And many decent Georgians relaxed into an ease they had not felt for months. For was not Talmadge out? And wasn't that what decent people everywhere wanted? How he was put out, or why he was ever put in, or who was in his place hardly seemed to matter, so real was the relief of knowing that the days of the tobacco-chewing Negro-baiting exhibitionist in the Governor's mansion were limited.

But to some, the genuine relief they felt seemed a betrayal of their own intelligence. It was good to know that much of Talmadge's prestige and power to do harm had been cut from under him. It was good to know that Ellis Arnall would

take the state university system out of direct politics; that he would make other minor governmental reforms; that he might do something about the Pardon Board racket. It was good to know that the next Governor is a man of intelligence, energy, shrewdness, whose charming wife has an interest in psychiatry and child welfare. It was good to know that through the concerted efforts of a massive block of vested interests, church women, labor unions, liberals, and well-oiled political machinery, Georgia had elected a coalition governor who is certain to give a few reforms to the state, who will keep his nails clean and not spit on floors, who will not directly incite race riots, who is friendly to President Roosevelt and the minor implications of the New Deal, and who is young with unimpaired and flexible mind.

Yes, despite after-images of mountains and mice, this is good.

Then why are some of us so disturbed even as we feel relief that Talmadge was defeated?

A partial answer may be suggested by analyzing the campaign and this relief—and the price the people of Georgia and elsewhere have paid for both.

For a long time, Gene Talmadge has been the loud speaker for vested interests (farm, factory, finance) who find it to their direct advantage to keep the Georgia white working people, town and country, in a fighting mood about the Negro. These groups are the planters, processors, textile

COMMON GROUND

men, bankers—all of whom have reason, with their present short-sighted policies, to want to keep wages low, to weaken labor unions, and to maintain prestige-value in cheap jobs reserved for whites only. Allied with them are other industrial, utility, financial, and newspaper interests, north and south, which have an indirect, if not direct, stake in race tension.

Gene has been their loud speaker. But he has been too loud for some who realize that so much corny noise has had not only the desired effect of arousing ignorant whites of all classes against the Negro but the undesired effect of also arousing many articulate liberals and a number of conservatives who for esthetic reasons don't like to listen in to a never-ending farm hour. These (combined with the radicals who seem to sound a continuous "alert") have turned a terrific battery of searchlights on Gene, the beams of which have extended far enough to include the activities of the vested interests themselves. They don't like it. Powers, north and south, now want peace and quiet and the all-clear signal. In other words, a little "unity" and the searchlights dimmed. So there have been differences of opinion as to Talmadge's efficiency-rating as an agent provocateur, and hence we see industrial and financial cliques splitting up in this election—some choosing the raucous Talmadge, others choosing the quiet, well-bred Arnall, and a few putting money on both—for it is generally understood that neither Talmadge nor Arnall would do anything to upset the economic status quo.

It has therefore been largely a matter of taste . . . a kind of basic choice between spittoons and manicure scissors. . . .

The white workers, the church women, the liberals, and the thousands of others who even for the sake of clarity cannot be rubber-stamped into functional or interest or "economic" groups had other deci-

sions to make. They had to decide whether they wanted the university system on or off the accredited lists; they had to decide whether they wanted or didn't want a few governmental reforms which Arnall promised and Talmadge did not promise. All else was guesswork. The union people guessed Arnall would do them less harm than would Talmadge, so many voted and worked for Arnall. The farm people guessed Talmadge would do them more good than would Arnall, so many voted and worked for Talmadge. The church women, cutting across city, town, country, and all classes, hoped and prayed that Arnall would not "stir up as much trouble among the poor whites and Negroes" as they knew Talmadge had and would; so, reinforcing their votes with their sincere prayers, they voted for Arnall. The liberals, also cutting across urban and rural groups but mainly of the privileged folk, did little praying but a lot of gambling—putting heavy stakes of time and spirit on the chance that whatever good Talmadge would do, Arnall would do more of it; whatever harm Talmadge would do, Arnall would do less of it. For Arnall is a gentleman—and is he not for Mr. Roosevelt?

And the thousands of others who cannot be rubber-stamped did their guessing too: some torn between bread-and-butter ends and "right and wrong" means; some torn by church and race, economics, family, culture loyalties . . . but all guessing. And there were the few who did not guess; but, seeking adventure to cure a great boredom, even if it meant Ku Klux or Vigilante adventure, chose Talmadge because Talmadge is "fun," Talmadge is the bad boy taking you out in the back alley or behind the barn and telling you things. . . .

Arnall won. After one of the hottest, dirtiest races Georgia has ever experienced, in which money and energy and time were

DEMOCRACY WAS NOT A CANDIDATE

spent in phenomenal quantities, Arnall won. And two issues were conclusively settled thereby: (1) a majority of Georgians would like to have their university system put back on the accredited list; (2) there are a few more whites in Georgia who like quiet than there are whites who like noise.

Any other gains are problematical.

Then why the relief? In part, it is the sheer physical relief any one feels when a loud noise stops. It springs from that irrational trait in human nature which makes us feel better when a sick child stops crying although we know there is no change in his physical condition; in our relief when the symptoms of a person mentally ill change from conspicuous to less obvious, though perhaps more dangerous, ones.

We in the South live on a keg of high explosives. Naturally we are a bit nervous when folks jump up and down on it—regardless of their good or bad reasons for doing so. It seldom occurs to us to try to get rid of the high explosives. All we want is for folks to stop jumping. Many people in Georgia feel relief simply because Talmadge has stopped jumping in an official capacity. The recent formation of Vigilantes, Inc., however, a secret society in which membership is restricted to “white males of sound health, good morals, and high character,” an apparent rival to the Klan, may now suggest to them that his jumping days are not over.

Another source of relief is in the satisfying of human desire for a little order in the midst of great disorder: for instance, a woman straightens her dressing table during a mass bombing. . . . The idea that something can be done now to put the university system back on the accredited list is exquisitely reassuring when set against the disheartening confusion of what has not been done—and some say

cannot be done—about the real problems of the Negro in the South, about poverty, low wages, sharecropping, and the dominating grip which certain industrial and financial interests have on the whole region. It gives the white Southerner a sense of human dignity and power to be able to fiddle around and straighten up the University of Georgia in the midst of a South and a world caught in the chaotic upheaval of total war and race-economic revolution.

Don't misunderstand. Little things are important. Democracy at home comes first. Local affairs must be attended to in the midst of war and revolution. Indeed, attention is more needful at such times than at any other. But how they are attended to, and why, and the price paid for the attention are basic to the adjudging of the value of what is done. One would be tempted to say, somewhat dogmatically, that to treat any symptom or problem or need without at the same time considering and treating its cause is highly questionable procedure, whether as scientific method, or common-sense know-how.

Democracy at home does come first. But democracy did not come first in Georgia's election. Democracy lost. Even though she was not a candidate, she lost; and democracy's people will pay the campaign expenses.

And what are these costs? They are so high in human values and human freedom that one hesitates to assess them briefly.

Not only was democracy not in the race, but each candidate took pains to disavow any connection with democratic concepts. As if by tacit consent—using him as symbol of the equality and freedom they disavowed—they made of the Negro a ball, and batted him back and forth, each throwing him back in the other's

COMMON GROUND

face, until the black man and human dignity were a poor bleeding thing when the campaign ended.

With a world at war, with an earth-wide revolution for human freedom stirring all peoples, with thousands of Georgia's white and colored boys giving their lives for "democracy," not once in speech or newspaper did either candidate or his spokesmen take a stand for freedom and racial equality. Not once was it admitted publicly that the Negro has the same basic rights as has the white man in America. But instead, while a million black Georgians listened, while thirteen million black Americans listened, while more than a billion colored peoples across the face of the earth listened,

Mr. Talmadge said: "As long as I am your Governor the Jim Crow law will be preserved. As long as I am your Governor no Negro foreman will give orders to white men and women in the mills of this state."

Mr. Arnall: "If a nigger ever tried to get into a white school in my part of the state, the sun would never set on his head. And we wouldn't be running to the Governor or the State Guard to get things done, either."

Mr. Talmadge: "For my part, I am proud to be called the champion of White Supremacy."

Mr. Arnall: "This state is governed by white people and always will be governed by white people."

Mr. Talmadge: "Sure . . . the nigger has a place. And that place is at the back door. There's no other place for him."

Mr. Arnall: "There is not a decent white man or woman in Georgia who believes in educating whites and Negroes in the same schools. There is not a decent white man or woman in Georgia who believes in social equality among whites and blacks."

Mr. Talmadge: "The attempt to mix the races in our schools was a dangerous menace. I scotched the snake before coils of racial equality suffocated the body of our educational institutions."

And it went on and on. . . .

Now it is over. The Negro is still in Georgia today. The white man is still in Georgia today. And both are bruised and cut and burnt to the bone by racial hate and fear.

Yes, we know the old arguments: the stern necessity in the South of giving up big ends for little ends, the old bitter choice between evils—because we dare not try the good. "We could do nothing else!" the Arnall people say. "We had to answer Talmadge! Nobody could have won the election if he had admitted the Negro's equality. After all, it was not we who tried to incite race riots. It was not we who promoted incidents. It was Talmadge! If he had not started it. . . ."

But who is going to stop it? Who is going to stop it before it drives the Negro to despair, before it tears our country to pieces, before it causes the peoples of the whole earth to lose faith in America and democracy itself?

This isn't the right time, the southern liberals, the "decent" people of the South say. *This isn't the right time*. . . . It is a sound that clangs on the Negro's ear drums. He has heard it since he was born. Now the whole world is hearing it.

Lillian E. Smith is co-editor of *South Today* (published at Clayton, Georgia), one of the most forward-looking of southern publications. A recent special issue, "Buying a New World with Old Confederate Bills," featured a discussion of racial democracy against the backdrop of total war.

A LETTER HOME

DOROTHY KISSLING

I have had word of you lately, America, lately;
news like a wound, like an ounce of lead in the chest,
heavy and smooth and lying too deep for the probe,
a small hot bullet of shame.

America, yes,
land of the free—but the brown boy, sweating in terror,
gapes with a graying mouth at his yesterday's comrade
roasted and charred and left smoking and reeking to warn him:
only so far may you come, to this line and no farther;
these are the words you may utter; this is the height
to which you may lift your eyes, if you lift them humbly,
remembering by whose leave.

O my country, my country,
magnificent, epic, astounding, tossing in beauty
like an ocean of furious wine, is it only your splendor
that aches in the hearts of beholders? your forests alone,
your waterfalls, mighty as God, your thundering canyons,
your deserts stabbed with the jewels of cactus and stars
and deep with the centuries' silence? your magical dunes,
white against black against blue, with an emerald shadow
shifting to purple at dusk? your trail-splintered woodlands,
where under the arching ferns in the marsh at the brookside
some afterthought of creation, some deity's bubble,
breaks in a columbine? O America, answer!
Answer if this be all, that the lovers who love you
may learn at what altars they worship: this, then, is all?

Speak but the word, and the heart's rebellion will answer!

THE SOUTH NEEDS HELP

THOMAS SANCTON

ANY Southerner who has read the true history of his section—the whole story and not alone the heart-lifting tales of battles and generals—knows that it is the long shadow of slavery which hangs upon his land today and confuses and maddens his people, which withers the spiritual values of their lives and institutions, and every day in every hamlet, town, and city, visits a tragic penalty upon the sons of the generations who first thought that they could build a green and fruitful society on the stolen labor of black slaves. Stealing these people from their own continent was a violation of a profound natural law, and we are paying for it. Not all the high-flown moral tracts of ante-bellum ministers and college presidents of the South could explain away the truth, that white men went blackbirding to another continent and stole a race of people; or justify one cotton dollar earned by the churchgoing planters who turned these people into their fields by the threat of the lash and violence, and said work for us, because God made you beasts. And not all the flaming words of Abolitionists could burn away the guilt of New England slave trading, or the Yankee's hypocrisy that he had not sinned against the Negro.

And so here we are today. Can this be last century's tragedy still upon the boards? Can this poll tax oratory in Washington, and these black boys swinging from the bridge at Meridian, and mass meetings in the North, and defiance in the South, and that solitary, symbolic Negro there walking down the country

road—can these be the actors and these be the situations that had begun to grip the nation by 1842? Yes, here they are, incredible though it seems. Here is Mr. Rankin speaking the lines which men who have been dust for a century once spoke in Congress. Here is the new Abolitionism in the North, in character, indignant and angry at the South and never realizing that Jim Crow lives in the Yankee's heart as it always did, and that a Harlem tenement is a hundred delta cabins, plus tuberculosis. And here is the eastern businessman, outgrowth of the tariff system, who wants a poverty stricken section to educate its masses and who lobbies to death any program that will cost a dollar, or, like adjustment of freight rates, enable the South to earn one. Yes, and here is that lonesome Negro on a southern road, the same dark symbol, disfranchised, working in another man's fields, as he did in another century, walking on down to the furnish merchant's for half a sack of potatoes. Seventy-five years ago if someone could have told a Yankee soldier—or a Confederate—that he had fought for four bloody years to settle an issue which would still be alive to plague his great-grandchildren, he could not possibly have believed it.

But the issue is alive today and it will be alive forever unless the problem of race relations becomes once more a matter of major national interest and we learn finally how to face it. It will stay with us, and we will find the tragedy in the North scarcely less than in the South. Relatively

THE SOUTH NEEDS HELP

few white people as yet realize that this is a smouldering and explosive problem which needs a frontal approach and an intelligent and courageous national effort to solve it: mere pamphlets printed by sociological or government agencies which ask for better treatment for the Negro are utterly inadequate. It seems to me that most white Northerners have a vague impression that when the Civil War was fought and the Emancipation Proclamation signed, the race question was officially over so far as the North was concerned. When they think at all on the subject, their thoughts generally revolve about lynchings and Jim Crow in the South. Few seem aware that the Negro is thoroughly Jim Crowed all over the North—considering Jim Crow in its deepest aspects and not just the fact of the Negro's being able to sit where he chooses in a subway train. Any Northerner who is inclined to think of the "race problem" as exclusively southern, the sure solution for which is repeal of the poll tax, might do well to get in touch with some Negroes themselves and listen for a while. He will find that the Negro faces some of his worst conditions in ghettos like Harlem, where, for example, one finds the most overcrowded city block in the country, one square containing more than 4,000 inhabitants, packed into rows of shabby, high-rent tenements.

And yet it is true that the main body of the race problem lies within the boundaries of the southern states, because some three-fourths of America's 13,000,000 Negroes live there. And it is also true that the problem is far more serious in the South, not only in the matter of quantity, but in degree. The Negro is oppressed in many ways in the North, and certainly economically, but the long anti-slavery tradition has at least given him some basic civil and social rights which the white

South continues to deny him and would like to deny him forever.

The white South has been paying an increasingly heavy cost for this denial, both materially and in the spiritual values that make for a healthy and developing society. For if you isolate a third of your population, hammer and din into their heads that they are "niggers," ignorant, irresponsible, and barbaric; if you deny them any opportunity to better themselves and to escape from this shabby destiny, they can only reward you by filling the role into which you force them. When the white South holds a third of its population in the "nigger" role, it places inexorable limits on its own total progress, for the standards of any great mass of an area's population influence the standards of the rest. If the Negro must do a day's work in a cotton field for seventy-five cents because he is black, a white worker won't get better pay because he is white.

There is then a heavy cost that southern white society pays for demanding that "the nigger keep his place." As a result, the Negro has a tremendous incidence of diseases like tuberculosis and syphilis; and bacilli can't read the white man's Jim Crow signs. Moreover, the Negro's dreary, hopeless surroundings have a blighting influence on his personality, just as they would have upon the white man's if destiny had reversed the roles. The product of these combined circumstances is the Negro as the southern white man sees him: poorly dressed, ignorant, aimless, superstitious, eager to flee the dreary routine of doing the white man's dirty work for a Saturday night fling at high life and perhaps drunken oblivion. The southern system of race relations produces the "nigger," and then the white man points to the product to justify the system. His mind is closed on the subject. It cannot understand that the white man himself could not beat such a system.

COMMON GROUND

Spiritually, also, the cost is great. For no matter how firmly or how bitterly the southern white believes in the philosophic justification for the Negro's continued debasement, he cannot escape the sense that something, somehow, is wrong with the picture. "To keep the Negro in the gutter, you've got to jump down there with him," a white southern legislator once told me, paraphrasing the words of a great Negro leader. But he saw no way out of it, because a Negro is a Negro and therefore his place is the gutter. That philosophy was good enough for the legislator's father and it was good enough for his grandfather, and even though he could see that something was wrong about the whole concept, it was good enough for him.

The fact that it is the South's unshakable custom to accept what its fathers regarded as holy is close to the heart of its deep social tragedy now. For if, suddenly, on a given day, the whole young college generation of the South would throw off the spell of their fathers' thinking and set about to read through a small list of first-rate historical and sociological studies of their own background, I have no doubt that a century's progress in race relations could be telescoped to ten years. (And if any young Southerner should read this and want to take me seriously, the books I should advise him to begin with are *The South Looks at Its Past* by Kendrick and Amett, *Human Geography of the South* by Vance, *Southern Regionalism* by Odum, *The Mind of the South* by Cash, *Liberalism in the South and Below the Potomac* by Dabney, and *Culture in the South*, edited by Couch.)

With sensitive individuals this feeling that something is wrong may trouble the conscience, and many are given to idealizing the traditional humanity of the master and servant relationships. Negroes are children, they say. With coarser people, the sense that something is wrong is

sublimated in a sort of cruel, Nazi bravado about "the lowest white man being better than the best nigger." This was something which, as a reporter in New Orleans, I used to see in many brutal cops. It is the wellspring of the lynch spirit. It is the spirit which results in the beating of Roland Hayes because his wife, suddenly disgusted, spoke her mind to a shoe clerk about Jim Crow restrictions in a democracy at war. I have often wondered how clergymen and the sincerely religious people of the South reconcile in their own minds the sermons on brotherly love and other noble teachings of the New Testament with the flagrant debasement of the Negro. I have never heard one sermon in my life on the race issue.

Now suddenly the white man finds that the symbolic Negro in the old cast of characters is, well, the same, and yet different. In the South at least he still speaks the same servile lines: yes boss, sure boss, dass right, white man; but a new tone has come into his voice, a grim sneer, and he is beginning to ad lib such lines as "I want democracy and I want it now." To meet this development, the white man has been shifting his own character accordingly, and once more, instead of the old massuh, he is becoming the brutal overseer. He has picked up the lynch rope again, and he has used it three times in a week in Mississippi. The real tragedy is that, unless the federal government really does something, the white man's part will become more and more brutalized.

In the face of this showdown, the small group of newspapermen and editors who have generally been considered spokesmen for the liberal element in the South have hit the trail to compromise and caution. They speak of real danger for the Negroes. They warn the Negroes and their leaders that this is no time to raise hell for democracy at home because we have first

THE SOUTH NEEDS HELP

got to win the war for democracy abroad. It is Toryism, exactly as we have seen it in India. It always sounds sensible, and it never accomplishes anything.

Any white man who has come out of the South knows that the Dabneys and Ethridges are speaking the truth when they say it will take a period of intensive education, the book kind and the political kind, to prepare the deeply prejudiced white masses of the South for economic co-operation with Negroes. But here is where a real liberal and a Tory must part company. For these solutions are so fundamental, and the speed at which they are approached so glacial, that the real white friend of the Negro cannot ask him to refrain from his indignant and bitter agitation for democracy now, to sit by waiting meekly through long decades for his position to improve: to ask him to forego his own agitation and his own leadership toward these ends and heed only the temporizing warnings of his "white friends." The real liberal knows that the Negro is never going to win any right he doesn't win for himself, by his own organization, courage, and articulation.

It is the southern white man who must realize that the Tory spirit, wherever it is found, is the spirit of death and defeat in this war, which must be fought as a people's war or be lost. In the South, the white man has got to realize that the race issue has profound new internal forces at work; that these are going to demand major adjustments, in white attitudes toward the Negro and in white economic treatment of the Negro. This is something that has been coming, although the white South has hardly realized it until now with the outbreak of the war.

For southern Negroes, as a group, in spite of the dearth of educational advantages, have matured with the slowly passing decades. They are not the simple, docile, ignorant people they were fifty years

ago. For one thing, since emancipation, their illiteracy figure has dropped from 85 per cent to 15. Southern Negroes are reading and writing and swapping their own ideas today about the order of things. For some time they have been growing aware and resentful of the anomaly of their position in a nation which is vociferously proud of its Constitution and its dedication to the rights of man.

The war has sharply accelerated this development. The fact that we are fighting as a democracy against totalitarian aggression has shed harsh, revealing light on our treatment of the Negro at home. The Southerner who insists that it is only the northern Negro press which is excited and indignant about the Negro's anomalous position is kidding himself. For even in the rural back country, Negroes have sensed the general meaning of this situation. In the field of economics, the Negro has partaken to some extent in the wartime industrial boom. There are tremendous new plants and consequently new labor markets in many parts of the South where they never existed before. This has placed a higher value on the Negro's labor, awakened his dormant self-respect and independence, encouraged him to speak out more openly for his rights; and finally—and this is the development which the white South has noticed above all others—the war has inclined the Negro to turn openly sullen and bitter against white employers and old Jim Crow restrictions to which, not so long ago, he seemed both accustomed and resigned.

The white man can go on forever fighting the old war to hold the Negro to his "place" of servility, or he can try to act like an inhabitant of the 20th century and try to accustom himself to living beside, rather than on top of, another race.

But the South by itself is not going to solve the problem. It needs the help of the nation. The federal government has

COMMON GROUND

got to approach the issue directly and sincerely, and as a war emergency. The first step should be to tell the FBI investigating the Mississippi lynchings that this time evidence and indictments, not a whitewash, is needed. For few things in recent months have embittered Negroes as deeply as the perfunctory investigation conducted after the brutal Sikestown, Missouri, lynching. Then, northern and western Congressmen have got to stop using the Negro issue for swaps and trades with southern members, and get through a strong anti-lynching bill and abolition of the poll tax. In addition, there should be evolved a broad program of legislative relief for the Negro that will accomplish material benefits and relieve his rightful bitterness as well. This should include the federal purchase of land for resale on long-term contracts to tenants and croppers, white and black, in order to raise these people to the class of self-respecting yeoman farmers who will not be afraid to respect one another.

But legislation alone cannot bring the solution, no more than it did in the Reconstruction. The federal government must also undertake, as Langston Hughes suggests earlier in these pages, a broad program of federally financed education.

Illiterate the South is—and poor. Through all its old history of the tariff laws and the belabored freight rate differentials, and by all the faults of its agricultural methods, the South has become for America, and particularly for the industrial and capitalistic East, a land very much like India—a backward land with little capital of its own and no particular commercial talent, but with great riches of minerals, agriculture, and labor only waiting to be garnered by the utilities or oil or chain store corporations controlled by northern capital. It is one thing to deplore the blind ignorance of the southern cracker who keeps the Negro in a state of

submissiveness by violence and the threat of violence, and who despises any suggestion of co-operation between the white and Negro races, or any effort to help the Negro improve his own position. It is another to realize that the cracker himself is the native of a poor South which spends about one-fourth as much in actual dollars for education per capita as do the wealthier regions, although even this little represents a greater proportion of his tax revenues; and that the money which is available for education must be spent on duplicating school systems for white and black (with the Negro getting the short end of it). The birth rate and the percentage of children in the country's population is highest in the South, and this in spite of the fact that in the last thirty years 3,500,000 more people have left it for the factories of Detroit and other areas than have entered it. The South, with pitiful resources, is thus educating a large proportion of the future residents of other sections. The situation is not fair to the South, not fair to the other states, not fair to the individuals concerned.

Education, even a system aided by heavy federal grants, cannot give the Negro overnight the unqualified democracy that his militant and articulate leaders are asking. But it is the thing which above all else can begin to dissolve the dull, flinty ignorance which is the mainstay of prejudice and bad race relations. Unless we unite on some such far-reaching and frontal assault on the problem, the new internal forces at work in it may explode in our faces. And unless we attack it now, courageously and intelligently, we give the lie to our professions of fighting a "people's war."

Born in New Orleans, a graduate of Tulane University, and Nieman Fellow at Harvard in 1941, Thomas Sancton is now Managing Editor of The New Republic.

WIMMIN IN BRITCHES

JEAN THOMAS

I DON'T favor no sich carryin's on!" Granny Pridemore told me, removing the pipe from her trembling lips and pointing with its stem toward a bus fast disappearing down the road. A huge bus, it bore the letters NYA and was filled with young folks, boys and girls, all in regulation work uniform—blue overalls. On the breast pocket of each was likewise the label NYA.

"Can't tell t'other from which," snapped Granny. "Wimmin in britches! In britches like men folks, a-goin' down to the level land for to work at public works where arn is melted plum bilin' hot like the seethin' furnaces of hell's foir. That's what sich places are. And wimmin, my own wimmin folks, a-goin' thar and a-garbin' theirselves like men. Wimmin's place is home, for to replenish the yearth and look arter their men folks and their youngins!"

Granny Pridemore leaned forward, eyes narrowed to a slit following the great bus that grew less and less as it sped on. A slim hand thrust from the window of the rear seat was still waving. "That's Rachel, twin o' Saul, a-wavin' me good-bye," she said. "A-tryin' to putt me in good heart about sich carryin's on. I've raised the two of 'em up, Rachel and Saul, from the time their Ma, Louellen, breathed her last at their birthin'. But I never 'lowed I'd witness sich as this, though I knowed in reason Rachel were ruminatin' somethin' through her wits ever since her twin, Saul, j'ined up to be

a sailor boy. 'Granny,' sez she, 'hit's my bounden duty to take holt!'"

"'Tain't like us Pridemores don't love our native land. We're willin' to die for hit. Our men folks have—from the first." She flashed a proud look of possession at the old flintlock gun above the fireplace. "My man's own grandsir, old Hannibal Pridemore, fit the Red Coats, and yonder, look you—" pointing at a hole in the jam rock beside the mantel shelf, "that's where old Hannibal, fearless as a mountain lion, foired back at the redskins when they sculped his first-born."

Off yonder a-top the hill was the burying ground with the dornick that marked old Hannibal's last resting place. He had dragged the stone from the creek bed and with his own hands carved his name thereon with an arrow head:

Hannibal Pridemore
Soldier of the Revolution

"Not that the good Lord needs a dornick so's to sarch out where a soldier's asleepin'," Granny was quick to explain, "but Hannibal Pridemore aimed that his own generation should memorize him—and their native land."

There was a stone there, too, for Granny's mate—Jonathan Pridemore. "For all he had lost an arm and a leg in the Home War—that were to free the slaves," she explained—"Jonathan Pridemore could plow as straight a furrow as ary man on Tadpole Creek."

COMMON GROUND

Nor had the Pridemores ceased with the Civil War to shoulder their muskets. Another stone, ivy-covered, was for Big Saul. "He fit in the skirmish with them Spaniards," Granny said, "and him not sharply in his teens. And not satisfied with that, he just nat'erly got so riled up when come the war with them Huns, t'other World War, he left the plow a-standin' in the furrow and told Louellen, his woman, he couldn't hold his self back no longer. Louellen were willin', I'm proud to own." Granny sighed. "Got pizen gas in his lungs, did Big Saul, acrost the briny deep. Fell off to a plum shadder of his self. But for all that, he lived to get back hure—outlived the mother of his youngins, Rachel and Saul. I taken 'em and fetched 'em up under this roof from the day Louellen lay a corpse. Louellen had no right to birth a babe at her age and her man in the fix he were with pizen gas in his lungs—all of five year arter the armistick were signed. But, eh law," she lifted high her head, "never saw no finer pair no where in the Big Sandy country than them Pridemore twins, for all they are spare built. Rachel and Saul has got breskit; plow a furrow, harvest the crop, fell a tree—Rachel, twin o' Saul, ever bit and grain as apt as her brother. Mought be this is my own fault. I everly egged her on to sich. 'Don't let Saul git the best of you, Rachel!' that were my talk." The faded eyes turned once more toward the bend of the road that had swallowed up the great bus marked NYA, laden with blue-clad boys and girls.

Granny Pridemore reflected a long moment. "I've lived to see a heap o' change hure in this Big Sandy country."

Silence fell between us. Granny sat now with hands in lap, having pocketed her pipe. Its ashes lay spent on the floor. "Times has changed. Young folks has new fangled notions. There's Tessie Bur-

dick's got her harr crapped plum clost to her meat, 'xceptin' out only a leetle bangs, like a foretop, and them all frizzy. Goes to and fro in that contrapshun with Rachel. Why, bless you, Tessie Burdick even hooks her thumbs in her galluses pint blank like a man. Calls herself a mechanic. Putts on big eye specs, melts arm with a flamin' tarch.

"Hit's not like the Pridemores ever shirked their duty. But I just can't bide the idee of my wimmin folks in britches. My wimmin workin' in public works 'longside the men. Hit's writ in the Book," she lifted a warning finger, repeating solemnly the words of the fifth verse of the twenty-second chapter of Deuteronomy: "'The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.'

"But Rachel has had a hankerin' to holp ever since Saul, her twin, sot his mind on bein' a sailor boy. She's kept at me day arter day to give consent. 'I'm wantin' to make guns and bullets like Grandsir Pridemore who fit the Red Coats, Granny! I'd done a heap o' braggin' all my endurin' life about the Pridemores and she flouted me with my own talk. 'Can't you stay here and holp,' sez I to her, 'and go along with me to a quiltin', holp to make a crop? We'll swop our handiwork, our corn, and our turkey fowls for savin' stamps. That's holpin', ain't it, Rachel?' I axed her but she weren't to be quiled."

Indeed from the time Uncle Sam's field representative had come to the county seat and talked with the women about their part in defense work, and had gone into the homes of mountain people up one creek and down another to meet personally the boys and girls and learn of their home life and surroundings and inclinations, young Rachel

WIMMIN IN BRITCHES

Pridemore had made up her mind about what she wanted to do. Always she and her brother had craved learning; they didn't let crops or bad weather keep them from school, even before good roads came up Tadpole way. Rachel could work fractions in her head, and as for Saul, he was as quick on foot as in his head.

"He clumb that oak off yonder on the ridge, plum to the top, fleet as a squirrel. 'I'm a-climbin' the topmast,' he'd holler down to me and Rachel. 'Watch me swing out on the riggin'!' Then he'd jump out and ketch holt of a big branch and skeer me nigh outten my wits. Him a-cravin' to sail the briny deep like lads in the song ballets I larnt him. That's where he got his notions, I'm sartin. 'I aim to be a sailor boy some day, Granny,' Saul, twin o' Rachel, ever boasted. Him that had never so much as set eyes on the main waters, let alone the mighty deep. Fact is Saul Pridemore only oncet in all his endurin' life went down to the mouth o' Big Sandy where hit jines up with the Ohio. Snuck off with a timber crew. Moughty glad to git back too.

"Whilst he were gone, Rachel got to prankin'. Snuck off ever little whip-stitch. First she'd answer when I'd call. But one day she did not make answer. She'd went to the big oak. I honkered down behint the fence row and scrutinized her antics. There she were a-climbin' and a-swingin' on the branches like Saul usen to do. Come to find out she'd tuck off her dress and slipped on a pair of Saul's britches—galluses and all—and clumb that tree. 'Ginst she come down I nigh wore out a passel o' willers on her back side.

"Wisht I'd not a-flogged the pore little critter that time," Granny sighed deeply. "Wisht I had her back, peaceable and contented like she were when she were a little set-a-long child, right hure by my side when I were knittin' or sewin'

a seam, stringin' fall beans whilst she threaded my needle, breakin' snaps to putt in the kittle, peelin' apples for to make apple butter. Hure at my side she sot, satisfied as a kitten agin' a hot jam rock."

Feebly I offered that Rachel had to grow up some time; that times had changed; that this is war; that women are eager to do their part everywhere. "Nurses, mill hands, sheet metal workers, they all want to help."

Mistress Lucretia Pridemore fixed me with her serious gray eyes. "I could even a laid under hit iffen Rachel had a-j'ined them wimmin in white shrouds that helps the doctors. But," she shook her head despairingly, "to see my wimmin folks in britches!"

The change in their way of living and working had not come about overnight for the grandchildren of Granny Pridemore. Step by step, "my grand 'uns got weaned away from Tadpole Creek and the ways of us mountain people." Just as she herself had seen the passing of ox cart and push boat, so she saw good roads bringing consolidated schools and the school bus which picked mountain boys and girls up right at their own lane and carried them to the school house. That meant more, better, and broader learning for the likes of Rachel and Saul Pridemore. It taught them to mingle and work and play with other boys and girls.

Then came the war. Newspapers cried the need of trained men and women. A field agent of the United States government came into the Big Sandy country, to George's Creek, to Tadpole, to Drizzly Hollow. She marked the keen intelligence of girls like Rachel Pridemore, the aptness of the young fingers.

Rachel, twin o' Saul, went down first to the training school in wood working at the County seat of Lawrence County;

COMMON GROUND

she learned the art of pattern making in wood, and wood handicraft; she learned to read blue prints—to work under Uncle Sam's trained instructors.

From the NYA training school her supervisor recommended she advance. "There's an acetylene welding shop and foundry on down at the mouth of Big Sandy, with a full-fledged plant, and a chance to learn something about sheet metal and shells, about the parts of an airplane, opportunity to learn how to handle those small parts, put them together, their importance and meaning, and maybe, if you'd like, you can be transferred eventually to another NYA training center farther advanced down at Carrolton. Or maybe—how'd you like going over to the Wright Plant at Dayton, Rachel Pridemore, how'd you like that?"

"I'd be plum pleased, sir," said Rachel, twin o' Saul.

She came home one Sunday for the foot washin' at Ethel church-house on George's Creek, and told Granny about it. When she had gone, Granny boasted, "It didn't take eye specs for that man to see how apt she were. She can turn her hand to anything. Putt out twicet as much work and twicet as fast as Martha Burgess' Emmie. Rachel's got a heap o' book larnin', 'long with plenty o' mother wit. Putts her mind to anything—do hit or die!" A faint smile played about her wrinkled mouth.

Some weeks later when I saw her, Granny looked a bit sheepish. "We're larnin' to make wroppin's for wounded soldier boys and sailor boys," she said. "'Pon my honor, Rachel, twin o' Saul, has kept at me and t'other wimmin 'round about Tadpole till we're goin' to school our own selves. Not readin' and writin' and book larnin', but makin' these wroppin's to stop blood from a-gushin'—new fangled ways. Why, we

usen to putt on wet tobacker leaves to stop the blood. . . . You best come along. They're havin' a meetin' at Rhona McCoy's today."

She leaned forward to confide proudly, "Melissy Hatfield will be there. They've plum forgot and forgive old rancors. That's what it takes in any troubles, the wimmin folks has first to forget and forgive and get peace in their hearts. Then, first thing you know the men folks do likewise. Hatfields and McCoy's is j'inin' up together in this hure war, comrades side-by-side. Why Little Joe Hatfield's boy axed his own self for to be putt alongside Bob McCoy's Dan."

At the meeting, work-seamed hands moved painstakingly, dexterously. Stacks of bandages neatly folded on chairs and bed and table evidenced the zeal of women from Tadpole and Hurricane, Drizzly Hollow and Lonesome and Forsaken. They gave attentive ear to first aid instructions and asked eager and intelligent questions. They talked of things being done by women elsewhere, down in the level land, farther away in the Big Sandy country. Rachel, twin o' Saul, and the other girls of quiet creeks and lonely hollows had brought back word, from time to time, of many defense activities of women folk throughout the land.

Finally, when the lesson was over, Granny observed, "Rhona, I taken notice you've got a quilt set up yonder. Wisht—I—"

"The quilt can wait," interrupted Mistress Rhona McCoy with a smile. "These is war times and us wimmin folks have to give a helpin' hand to the Red Cross."

"We've larnt our lesson for today, wroppin's and sich. My fingers is itchin' to quilt a span or two," Granny Pridemore persisted.

"Mine too," added Melissy Hatfield.

And quicker than it takes to tell Granny



COMMON GROUND

had helped Rhona and Melissy and Martha unroll the quilt and make fast the frame.

Needles glided swiftly in and out forming neat fan-like designs upon the patches.

"Hit'll be ready to take outten the frame 'ginst sundown," said Granny.

"Won't be our fault if it's not," piped Melissy Hatfield.

When the last stitch was finished, even to the edges being bound with a piece of bleach, Granny pulled herself up out of her chair and, shaking threads and bits of cotton and cuttings from her apron, addressed the group. I knew from the exchange of looks between her and Rhona that the two had had their heads together beforehand.

"Only t'other day," Granny began slowly, "Rachel, twin o' Saul, writ back that wimmin folks down in the level land do all sorts of handiwork—and then they swop hit off for stamps—defense stamps so's to take a whack at them Jay-pans." Her fingers fumbled in her bosom, brought forth the letter of young Rachel. She handed it to Rhona, who read it aloud.

Whereupon Granny had more to say. She told about Tennessee Preston over on Forsaken, making a Victory quilt. "They raffled it off like we usen to raffle off boxes at a box supper and pies at our church sociables."

She asked for the notions of the others about such. Mintie Frasher bobbed up from her corner and spoke her mind in favor. Melissy Hatfield couldn't wait until she had her say. Ellen Burgess just didn't know when to let up. Even Tessie Burton's Aunt Vade said she was willing to sew until the skin dropped off to the bone of her fingers to "take a whack at the Jay-pans."

Before the meeting broke up, the Tadpole Women's Defense Club had come into being, with Mistress Lucretia Pride-

more at its head. Victory quilts were not all they made. Aprons from meal pokes, frocks for children from feed sacks (even if Granny couldn't get all the lettering boiled out in the big wash kettle); rugs plaited from the old wearin' clothes of their men folks who no longer had need of civilian clothes. Dilapidated felt hats left behind by the mountain boys now in khaki were converted into chair tidies and table mats. All of which—through the co-operation of their friends and sisters in the level land—found a ready market. The proceeds went for defense stamps. Even the little girls not yet in their teens, formed a similar defense club, sewed, and sold their handiwork to buy stamps. They gathered up scrap, old plowshares, bolts, farm implements broken and out of use, and packed them off to Uncle Lafe Preston's scrap boat that floats down the Big Sandy.

At one of the women's meetings word finally reached them that Martha Burgess' boy had lost his life at Pearl Harbor. That day Granny Pridemore plucked her fingers oftener than the quilt patches held in her trembling hands. She sat gravely silent, thinking of Saul, her sailor boy, Saul, twin o' Rachel, way off yonder in strange countries. "They darsen hurt my boy." Her lips formed soundless words. "They darsen harm a harr of his head." Her fingers jabbed the needle uncertainly through calico patches.

Presently the talk turned to women in defense work. Pride and approval was unanimous—as to the work. "We're pleased," chorused the mothers of Emmie and Tessie and Jane, "and we appreciate, about their apparel, that it is the only way for women to dress at such work—in overalls like their fathers and brothers, husbands and sweethearts."

But Granny Pridemore was still to be reckoned with. Wimmin in britches!

"What a body sees with their own eyes,

WIMMIN IN BRITCHES

they can appreciate with their own wits," she said finally out of her long silence.

I suggested she come along down to the level land and see for herself the carryin's on at the NYA War Production and Training Center.

At last she consented and, for the first time in all her life, journeyed down to the level land.

"Times has changed," she admitted as we drove home later along the improved highway that once had been a wilderness trail. "Woman," she turned to peer earnestly at me from beneath her somber slat bonnet, "did you mind how that man (the supervisor) praised Rachel's handiwork? Did you mind how she putt on them big eye specs and up with that tarch and burnt that piece of arn plum smack in two and the sparks just a-flyin'?"

"I'm satisfied iffen Rachel had a wore petticoats she'd never manage in the world such works," she said slowly. "You seen how she run fleet as a bird on the wing and grabbed that thar little half-witted Minnie Estep outten the strop and saved her life." The swiftly moving belt that operated a lathe had all but caught Minnie, who was taking risks.

I stayed the night and at sunup Granny Pridemore was talking again of all she had seen and learned at the War Production Center down in the level land.

"Sich work and sich places ain't for petticoats. There's a time and place for everything, a place to rejoice, to mourn, to weep." Suddenly she straightened. "This is a time of war. Our men folks has got a-bound to go. Us wimmin folks has got a-bound to putt our shoulders to the wheel." She lifted shining eyes to the old flintlock gun. "I could—" she ventured slowly, cautiously—"iffen I had it to do, foir as straight as old Hannibal Pridemore his own self. I could, iffen I had it to do, blow the last 'tarnal one of them Jay-pans plum to eternity for

what they done to Martha Burgess' boy at Pearl Harbor."

It was a dreary winter day when I returned to Tadpole.

Granny Pridemore sat by the hearth fire, alone in her cabin. In the lorn window hung a tiny service flag. "Rachel, twin o' Saul, sent hit back to me from away off yonder in Ohio. She's workin' on ships with wings now. She learnt off in meltin' that hot arn, and she were so apt with her fingers they've 'ticed her on off to Ohio."

We talked of many things. Before we realized it evening had come. "Stay the night," she urged, and, remembering the way of mountain people—that women folk do not travel a mountain road by night, alone—I stayed.

Looking out the window Granny caught sight of a neighbor coming slowly up the moonlit road. "What you reckon old Brother Burton's doin' out on the road this time o' night?"

Brother Zachariah Burton had baptized and funeralized many a Pridemore. He called out, "Hallo!" and Granny Pridemore quickly flung wide the door to welcome him.

They talked a while of news of the boys in the strange countries across the deep. They talked of the girls in defense work, in shell and munition factories.

Then, slowly, Brother Burton fell to talking of those who had sons in the service. Of the uncertainties of letters coming back. "Only t'other day," said Granny, "I heard Rhona say she hadn't heard from her boy for nigh onto two month. And pore Melissy off yonder on Big Hurricane, she's oncertain. And Rhona says if pore old Melissy can bear hit, she can. Melissy ain't for certain if her boy is livin' or dead. The governmint writ back—missin'. Hit's a powerful misery to be oncertain."

COMMON GROUND

Brother Burton crossed his legs, lacing his bony fingers in and out. "Hit must be a misery to be oncertain—but to know—plum for certain—that—" The words choked in his throat.

Granny interrupted to talk proudly about Rachel, twin o' Saul. "She writ in her last letter about Saul—how proud he is of bein' a sailor boy. Can't nobody git the best of the Pridemores. Leastwise, Rachel and Saul!" Her eyes twinkled.

She paused a moment. But only a moment. "I'm gettin' old and drinlin'. Though I can sew a seam for the Red Cross—bandages and sich for our sailor boys—and our soldier boys," she added quickly. "I can holp with sewin' for them wimmin with white shrouds that taken sich good care of our boys off yonder in them strange countries. But work like with them tarches and makin' parts for them ships with wings—that's for the likes of Rachel.

"Brother Burton," her voice quavered, "mought be I'm layin' myself liable to everlastin' torment, but I'm bound to own what's in my heart—I'm proud of Rachel, twin o' Saul—doin' what she's doin' in this here war. I've come to understand she had a-bound to putt on the apparel of men, Brother Burton, though the Good Book speaks a'gin hit. Times has changed, Brother Burton. Rachel had a-bound to garb herself like she has—in britches!"

There—she had out with it.

Then she added, "Rachel's a-doin' her part same as Saul." Her eyes sought the service flag.

"Yes, Sister Pridemore—" Brother Burton's voice sounded strangely far off—"there's a time and place for everything—a time to mourn, to weep, a time—" He faltered. "Sister Pridemore, the good Lord gives a body stren'th in their hour of need—" His eyes turned helplessly

toward the tiny service flag with its lorn star in the lorn window of the Pridemore cabin.

Mistress Lucretia Pridemore, following his gaze, straightened suddenly as if a bomb had fallen upon her roof. "Brother—Burton—" She lifted high her head, but I saw the blood drain from her cheeks, the fingers of her clasped hands grow white at the joints. "I can bear whatever the good Lord sees fitten to send upon me." The trembling hands closed tighter, the finger nails pressed deep into cupped palms.

In a strangely vibrant voice, she spoke. "From this hour on I'll know no peace in this heart of me, until—until Rachel, twin o' Saul, takes off acrost the briny deep in one of them thar ships with wings like the Scriptur foretold a-havin' dominion over the birds of the air. I'll have no peace in the heart of me until she draps a whole passel o' bums down on them Jay-pans and blows 'em plum off the face of the yearth.

"Us Pridemores don't aim to let nobody git the best of us. I wisht—I wisht—though I may be layin' my own self liable to the torments of everlastin' hell's foir—" she lifted her blazing eyes to the flintlock gun in the wall hooks above the mantel shelf—"I wisht I mought take hit along and j'ine up with Rachel, twin o' Saul.

"They darsen do to our sailor boy—what they've done." The voice fell to a whisper. "Wisht I mought j'ine up—though an old critter like me is too old and drinlin', I reckon, to putt on britches."

Jean Thomas is well-known to C.G. readers for her previous articles in these pages. Her "Tooth-Dentist" appeared in the Autumn number.

The illustration is by David Fredenthal.

THE CASE OF JACOB GOLDSTEIN

MARIE SYRKIN

SUPPOSE you are Mr. Jacob Goldstein, or Mr. Lester Goldstone, according to your taste in nomenclature. You are an average American Jew with the virtues and limitations of average human beings everywhere when they have been neither debased nor exalted by special incitements. You are just run-of-the-mill; that is to say, you do not belong to that ardent minority among Jews whose intellectual prowess and idealistic fervor is a constant irritant to the professional anti-Semite. Till the advent of Hitler, you evinced no active interest in Jewish causes of any kind, except, of course, Jewish charities, because you were so essentially confident and at peace in the America of which you were an industrious, law-abiding and ambitious part.

Now, naturally, being a normally sensitive and decent person, you are deeply troubled by the catastrophe that has overtaken other Jews in the Hitler-dominated countries. You cannot read of the massacres of the helpless and the innocent without a special horror and anguished astonishment. But, after all, the terror of which the newspapers bring you inescapable reports is taking place in Europe—the nightmare Europe where a new barbarism holds sway. And you, Jacob Goldstein, are a grateful citizen of a powerful democracy whose vision of a free world in which human instead of animal values prevail has never seemed so precious and so good as at this turning-point in history.

It is after Pearl Harbor, and you are anxious to do your bit. You have grown

a trifle portly—you were more limber “over there” in the last shindy, as your membership in the American Legion testifies. But you still have plenty of grit. So you get yourself enrolled as an air-raid warden. Your wife, in the meantime, is ringing all the doorbells in the apartment house and trying to sell war stamps. She also explains graphically how ladies should jump up and down on tin cans to flatten them for Uncle Sam.

You are so full of patriotic zeal you even get the superintendent to call a tenants’ meeting in the basement, and, since no one seems anxious to talk, you make a speech to start the ball rolling. You don’t happen to live in a Jewish neighborhood, but that does not dampen your spirit. Aren’t we all out to lick Hitler and the Japs? For the first time, you can voice your sentiments about the menace of the Nazi plot for world domination without feeling you must add apologetically, “Don’t think it’s because I’m a Jew.” In terse, original phrases you urge your fellow tenants to keep them rolling and flying, to enroll as air-raid wardens, to sign up as nurses’ aids. In short, there are no limits to your ingenuity and enthusiasm.

Then, one evening as you trudge dutifully up and down your block, you hear some passer-by mutter: “Another one of those damned Jewish air-raid wardens.” And when you report the incident to your cronies, you discover several others have also encountered this curious complaint: “Too many Jews are air-raid wardens.”

COMMON GROUND

It hurts you in a special way. Of late, even in the United States, you have become accustomed to hearing: "Too many Jews are doctors," or lawyers, or bankers, or store-keepers, or politicians. You have even heard some wag remark that too many Jews were Nobel prize winners. When your younger boy—not the one now in an Army camp on the West Coast—came home with an excellent report card, your pleasure was faintly tinged with concern, for you had recently read an article which indicated too many Jewish children strove for high marks.

But this is something different, or at least it seems different to you. You can fathom some motive in the other "too many's"—motives of economic rivalry, or envy, or unreasoning libelous prejudice—but "Too many Jewish air-raid wardens" is beyond you. Everybody knows you receive neither money nor honor for your promenade. And there is all the room in the world for more wardens. Your particular district is clamoring for volunteers and not getting the required number. Nevertheless, someone has raised the evil whisper: "Too many Jewish air-raid wardens."

You wonder if you should resign. Should you hand in that white arm band and take it easy in the evenings? Should you tell your wife to make less noise about the tin? But then "they" will say you are not co-operating. You can already hear the swelling mutter: "Too few Jews are air-raid wardens; too few tin cans. . . ."

Yes, Mr. Goldstein is in a tough spot. And when he looks for counsel, he is increasingly confused. He reads neither the Anglo-Jewish nor the Yiddish press, where the "Jewish problem" is debated back and forth with illuminating, if unrelenting, thoroughness. He does not understand Yiddish, and his subscription to the Voice of Israel is listed among his charities. He hardly ever gets around actually to read-

ing an issue, though he is always planning to find the time. However, though he lacks theoretical equipment, he has a practical knowledge of certain aspects of anti-Semitism. He has long been familiar with some forms of social discrimination, but these do not agitate him too much. He has no morbid longings for clubs or resorts which do not welcome him. Economic discrimination is more serious, and though he personally has not been affected by it, he is ready to fight with all he has for equality of opportunity.

But the virulent, pathological anti-Semitism of Nazi propaganda is something Mr. Goldstein had not expected to witness in these "enlightened" times. Still, once he perceived the character of this systematic onslaught on all civilized values, it became a phenomenon that, after a fashion, he could understand, just as he could understand the venom in a serpent's poison sac. It was the nature of the beast. Even when Mr. Goldstein would, shudderingly, come across a copy of Social Justice or the mouthings of a William Dudley Pelley, he understood. This was the enemy, trying to get a foothold in America, in the time-honored way, by exploiting lusts and prejudices. It was not America. And America had scented the danger. Social Justice was no longer being hawked on street corners; the lads of the Pelley stripe were finding their way behind bars as traitors and Nazi agents. By this time, thought Mr. Goldstein, everybody would have figured out that anti-Semitism was the first and cheapest device of the pro-fascist demagogue. Since this was now obvious to even the meanest intelligence, nobody would let the war effort be jeopardized by such a vicious and palpable trick. And Mr. Goldstein was comforted—till the air-raid warden incident. Apparently the poison was still at work, despite the war.

Today Jacob Goldstein is wondering.

THE CASE OF JACOB GOLDSTEIN

II

Mr. Goldstein is intellectually confused for still other reasons. He is familiar with the sting of his enemies—that is an old affliction whose total cure he expects when the ideals of a civilized world prevail—but he is increasingly baffled by the exhortations to which he is subjected by his friends. He is startled to find himself, in ever-growing measure, the subject of discussion and analysis. He had assumed he was taken for granted as one of the country's constituent religious and national strains; yet now hardly a month passes in which some solid magazine does not devote space to his unspectacular existence.

He has been a pretty faithful reader of the Saturday Evening Post for years, for instance—likes their wholesome “American” fiction (none of your Faulkner or Hemingway for Mr. Goldstein)—and he was uneasily astonished to discover a series of three articles on the “Jewish problem” in that safe, familiar territory. All were written by Jews, and all volunteered different analyses and offered different panaceas.

Judge Jerome Frank, in “Red, White and Blue Herring” (December 6, 1941), advocated the thesis that if Jews were given half a chance, they would vanish in the “melting pot,” leaving no trace behind. In fact, according to Judge Frank, Jews in their zeal to merge swiftly and anonymously with the American scene were posthaste throwing overboard all the spiritual and cultural baggage acquired through the centuries, including their great ethical and religious heritage. “Most Jews born in America regard as their significant heroes Jefferson and Lincoln, not Moses and David.” Mr. Goldstein was uneasy. He hesitated to take issue with a Justice, but he did not consider allegiance to Lincoln and Moses mutually incompatible, and he rather resented being de-

prived of figures whom he had always viewed as among the chief glories of his people. He couldn't figure out the Judge's mathematics—according to which his value would increase if he reduced himself to a colorless zero.

Then a few weeks later (March 21, 1942), Mr. Goldstein came upon “The Jews Are Different” by Waldo Frank, which went off on quite a different tack. The second Mr. Frank pictured the Jews as bearers of the “democratic tradition of the prophets”; far from growing remote from the moral passion of the Bible, as the Judge adduced, they were all “different” because, consciously or unconsciously, Jews carried the fire of the democratic ideal.

Though the mantles of prophecy sat uneasily upon him, Mr. Goldstein found the second article more attractive than the first. At least it left him the holy books, though perhaps in more potent and immediately effective doses than he had been accustomed to imbibing. But when the next week his eyes fell upon “The Case Against the Jew” by Milton Mayer, he began to feel a little sick. After the first sentence: “The Jews of America are afraid their number is up—if not today, then tomorrow or the next,” Mr. Goldstein, though generally a peaceable man, experienced somewhat less than affection for the author. And though Mr. Mayer went on to indicate that Jews would be saved if they mended their ways, and returned “to the radical righteousness of Isaiah,” Mr. Goldstein was intensely skeptical of the constructive nature of Mr. Mayer's contribution to the Jewish question.

By this time, all Mr. Goldstein's friends were debating these various points of view with intense agitation, not because of the intrinsic merits of the attitudes indicated but because they had been expressed in a large American magazine.

(Similar articles in the Anglo-Jewish press would not have caused the slightest ripple.) PM periodically carried huge headlines on relevant themes, and by June Mr. Goldstein was already psychologically attuned to reading "Jews, Anti-Semites and Tyrants" by Stanley High in Harper's. Ordinarily Mr. Goldstein did not read Harper's; he thought it a bit high-brow, but the title attracted him as he scanned the current magazines at a newsstand. Mr. High's opinions, especially since they were those of a Methodist not a Jew, gave the Goldstein entourage quite a lift. It was inspiring, if a little disconcerting, to read: "Anti-Semitism is a recurring form of reaction against the struggle of Western man for religious, political, and economic emancipation. The Jew has been hated because the sources of that struggle are in large part Jewish." Mr. and Mrs. Goldstein looked upon each other with a touch of mutual awe when they discovered "The heaviest responsibility that the Jew has to bear is his gift to the world of the Old and New Testaments, the Prophets and Jesus. Encompassed in those gifts are the form and substance, the life and breath of the struggle for freedom which the powers of the world have most desperately fought to suppress." This made the role of both Hitler and Goldstein crystal clear. Thus reinforced, Mr. Goldstein felt that even the loudest chorus of "Too many Jews are air-raid wardens" would be unable to keep him from the completion of his appointed rounds.

But along came the Reader's Digest (September, 1942) with an article entitled "The Facts About Jews in Washington" by W. M. Kiplinger. Again there were headlines in PM, plus an article by Pearl Buck. Mr. Kiplinger made plain that Jews in government employ were hard workers who had won their jobs by passing civil service examinations. He also stated that young Jews were attracted to

Washington because, through the automatic functioning of the civil service rules, they escaped the discrimination they met in private employment. Yet Mr. Kiplinger's conclusion was, nevertheless, that since Jews were only 4 per cent of the population, they should not have more than 4 per cent of the positions. If not for Pearl Buck's beautiful rejoinder, Mr. Goldstein would have had a bad time of it. After all, man cannot live by prophecy alone, and if Jews were to be kept out of considerable sectors of private employment by discrimination, and out of civil service by such a voluntary *numerus clausus*, Mr. Goldstein did not see how the home fires would be kept burning.

III

The psychological difficulties of Jacob Goldstein are by no means unique. They are shared by many American Jews who till the past decade had had no special Jewish self-consciousness and no acute awareness of Jewish problems as such. But no shield, either of willful ignorance or of apathy, can be stout enough to withstand the batterings of anti-Semitic attack or pro-Semitic apologies to which Jews are now being subjected. The ordinary Jew looks aghast at the costumes with which he is being furnished. On the one hand, he sees the Satanic vestments, complete with horns and cloven hoof, of Hitler demonology, dragged out of some primordial abyss of madness and bestiality. On the other, he beholds the Messianic robes and martyr's halo neatly laid out in readiness for a final holocaust. And he is oppressed by the melodramatic character of the roles to which he is assigned. He is bewildered at finding himself alternately cast as Ormazd or Ahriman, as the cardinal principle of good or of evil. He would like a part more in accordance with his real talents—the part of a simple

THE CASE OF JACOB GOLDSTEIN

human being, judged according to his particular merits or demerits.

It is just this part which is becoming increasingly hard to get, even in the United States. Too many Jews feel themselves under psychological compulsions which curtail their freedom of action and freedom of expression. Before the war, many Jews deliberately refrained from denouncing the international menace of Nazism as vigorously as they were inclined, because they were afraid of the charge of war-mongering. The charge was raised anyhow, because anti-Semitic propaganda, being essentially irrational in character, is never dissuaded from launching an accusation because it is false. The fact remains, however, that the leading American interventionists counted few Jews in their midst. It was considered an asset for the interventionist camp that its most articulate figures, from Dorothy Thompson up to President Roosevelt, were overwhelmingly non-Jews. Yet the circumstance that the Jews had front seats at the Nazi carnival of death should not have made their testimony less telling. It was as though a man whose home and family had just been destroyed by incendiaries bent on starting a general conflagration should hesitate to give the alarm or point to the criminals for fear of being accused of arson.

Since America's entry into the war, Jews are again aware of malicious whispering campaigns to the effect that Jews are getting special consideration from draft boards, are getting desk jobs, etc. All the hoary, thousand times disproven libels about Jewish participation in the war effort, part of the stock in trade of anti-Semitic propaganda, are being hauled out anew. Consequently there are Jews who catch themselves noting the Jewish names in casualty lists with the dismal hope that the neighbors will not fail to observe the number of Cohens and Levys cited. Part

of the pathos of this hope is that no matter how impressive the figures are, or how heroic the exploits recounted, not a single anti-Semitic jibe will thereby be stopped. Hitler found it very simple to efface all Jewish names on monuments to the war dead in Germany, and the fact that the proportion of Jewish soldiers in the German army was greater than their proportion in the population in no way affected the success of his campaign. The same holds good for milder manifestations of the disease of anti-Semitism.

There is another fear from which some Jews suffer. We are living in a period which is witnessing the most savage persecution of a minority in the history of mankind. The systematic massacres of Jews staged by the Nazis make St. Bartholomew's Night child's play in comparison. But while some American Jews are outraged by the comparative indifference with which civilized mankind is viewing the physical annihilation of a people, others feel that no undue fuss should be made about the martyrdom of the Jews. The same people who shared in the general outburst of indignation at Lidice—an outburst which found dramatic and moving expression—take for granted the silence which shrouds the prolonged Lidice of European Jewry. In this silence is a tacit admission that Jews are different, that their sufferings are different, and that the compassion and fury which should be the rational reaction to these sufferings, unparalleled anywhere in scope and intensity, would somehow be unseemly.

Yet the impulses to express indignation, to suffer, to arouse the sympathy of one's fellows, should not be subject to a kind of self-imposed censorship for fear of arousing antagonism. Such a censorship, whether in the emotional, political, or economic spheres, is a surrender of fundamental human rights.

COMMON GROUND

Suggestions that there be a voluntary *numerus clausus* for Jews in government employ are an indication of an alarming trend, all the more so because they are frequently put forward in good faith. Jacob Goldstein, the average Jewish citizen of the United States, has the right to expect that his efforts in any field will be judged only by his competence and his honesty. Any other interpretation of his rights is, on the face of it, discriminatory. Particularly when the country is engaged in a life and death struggle, it can ill afford to be wasteful of the ability or industry of its citizens in order to cater to prejudices which are the antithesis of our professed ideals.

The open rabble-rousing and hate-mongering of obvious fascist elements is a danger which cannot be minimized, and which is being faced by everyone intelligently

concerned with the future of our country. But there is a more insidious danger, not so readily recognized, but equally potent. That is the creation of a psychological atmosphere in which the individual is divested of his particular attributes, be they good or evil, and made into an impersonal category answerable to some fiction in the popular mind. That is the first step in the dehumanization of Jacob Goldstein and the substitution of a tribal symbol. It is also the beginning of a psychosis, alien to the spirit of America, whose development if unchecked would threaten the organic structure of our democracy.

Marie Syrkin is a frequent contributor to this magazine. Her "Morale Begins at School," in the Spring 1942 issue, was widely commented upon.

THOSE OF GERMAN DESCENT

GEORGE N. SHUSTER

YEARS ago, they used to call themselves proudly "German Americans." They have been having a hard time of it.

The First World War was incidentally their tragedy. If you step into the Milwaukee Public Library, you will find a good collection of German drama. All the earlier plays of Hauptmann, Sudermann, and the rest are there. But no titles more recent than 1914 are on the shelves. The interesting fact is not so much that no additional books were purchased after the war, but that nobody cared enough to ask the librarians to buy more. Prior to the fateful crash, Milwaukee had supported its own German theatre. Music in the beer gardens had stressed the waltzes of Strauss, the overtures of Weber. On the fences surrounding the amusement parks, one could read the telltale notice, "Post No Pills." And in not too far distant Chicago, the Hotel Kaiserhof had a picture of Wilhelm II in every room. The bar at the Bismarck Hotel featured Muenchener beer.

Those of German descent suffered keenly under the impact of that war. I suppose the great majority thought Woodrow Wilson a bad blunderer, and sent their boys off to the A.E.F. with bitterness. Many of these lads enjoyed their sojourn in the Rhineland, feeling much more kinship with burghers and their daughters there than with those in hard-pressed France. Nevertheless, the ties were apparently not deep: when these boys came back to the United States, they were

Americans. Only a very few in that generation retained any cultural or sentimental interest in the Fatherland. Organizations to safeguard the rights of those of German descent were formed, it is true, but these had no great vitality.

And now in 1942?

I have just returned from a hasty, admittedly superficial trip of observation. My conviction is that the younger generation in the Middle West has no attachment to the Old World from which its grandparents came. Neither is much of it in too great a hurry to get off to war. Many told me frankly they preferred farming to fighting and felt sorry for the "old man" who would have to do the chores alone. Still Hitler's diverse remarks about the aristocracy of German blood had found not so much as an echo in their minds. It is difficult to see how it could, now that all these young people are so deeply rooted in the pluralistic American landscape. For example, a red-headed Irish lad I once knew married a German girl and already has a generous allotment of children. His sister married a German boy whose father, a carpenter, came to the Middle West from Paderborn. She too has babies. Nobody in either family thinks of the Old Sod or the Old Home. In all truth, their attitude came as a bit of a shock to me. In days gone by, my generation talked a good deal about the cities of Germany, the old Emperors, the wonders of Nuremberg and Bremen. Yet be-

fore this war, the present generation probably didn't know that Nuremberg is on the map.

I do not mean that such Americans are never conscious of their German origins. To begin with, they have a vague awareness of their own type. While it is a curious circumstance that the German has made no headway in American politics—even the Czech has outstripped him in his own bailiwick—he has dug his way deep into the churches, into agricultural associations, into certain kinds of industrial endeavor. Ecclesiastical life in the Middle West has therefore in many places developed Teutonic characteristics, particularly since the Irish influence has waned in Catholic circles. And, along with certain other sections of the American population, it often manifests a traditional suspicion of the British, as well as an instinctive feeling that to raise the European issue at all is to make oneself annoying. Nevertheless, even German American churchmen have not fanned the flames of isolation. Such signs of participation as have been evident must be attributed to the influence of more belligerent persons in other groups.

The more prosperous American of German descent in the newer generations does not as a rule wish to be reminded by the public of his origins. Perhaps the major difficulty encountered by those who seek to rally German Americans behind the war effort lies right there. One brewer of means declared, for example, that he wouldn't contribute a cent to any organization concerned with protecting the rights of those of German origin, but that he was prepared to reward handsomely anybody who would make people think he wasn't a German even in name. Others are afraid of their shadows. They fancy Mr. Dies will corral the signatures on German Amer-

ican society rosters, and so they shy away from every kind of association with such ventures.

Older people naturally respond differently to the challenge of the hour. They still have some knowledge of the German language, and they refuse to believe even Hitler wholly bad. Or if he be bad—as for religious reasons they may concede him to be—they refuse to blame him on anybody except the fashioners of the Treaty of Versailles. Their fathers and mothers, peasants for the most part, were deeply attached to Lutheran or Catholic faiths; they cannot imagine Germans being won over to the new paganism or induced to support Nazi doctrines. Adolf is to their minds a sort of wild-eyed leader of a different kind of Ku Klux Klan. Many of these people are even now skeptical about the purposes of our military endeavor, and sure in their own minds that peace could have been preserved. They are quite ready to criticize the foreign policy of the Administration, provided the discussion is private.

Then one finds, as well, a few groups of relative newcomers who are frankly anti-interventionist without being pro-Nazi. Perhaps the most important single group is comprised of farmers, now settled on the western prairies, who some years ago were driven out of the Volga region by the Soviet regime. The feeling there is historically and violently anti-Communist, and there is a tendency to believe that if the German armies could crush Stalin the world would be better off. A few other rural groups share this attitude, though they are more temperate in their views. These people find it hard to credit most commentators on Germany. One clergyman, who went over in 1935 to see conditions for himself, told us his parishioners would not believe what he told them about the real state of affairs

THOSE OF GERMAN DESCENT

there. They fancied he was adopting too clerical a point of view.

Now and then newspapers in the German language still cater to these older people, but on the whole they are now not in the least subversive—even if many have not yet gone all-out for the war. When the publisher of one chain of minor weeklies said to a government-appointed critic not so long ago: "If we did what you said, we wouldn't be neutral," he admitted, of course, that his papers were not fully on the side of the United Nations. Understandably, they want to keep subscribers by not offending anyone on what are believed "political grounds." The papers are at present not dangerous, though it must be admitted they could do more to enkindle enthusiasm for the war effort in their readers. They are probably often viewed with more suspicion than the circumstances warrant. Thus, when one paper recently printed an editorial which pointed out that although German Americans wanted to be good citizens, they had a sentimental attachment to the "mother country," several sleuths went into action and swiftly discovered that the pages subsequent to the editorial carried a poem illustrative of mother love and a short story in which there was talk of maternal affection! But the excitement subsided when it was discovered that the editor of that journal has been and is a valiant enemy of all things Nazi, and that the references to "mother" were purely coincidental.

Most of the relative newcomers among the German Americans (and here I do not include the refugees) are, however, to be found in the coastal and urban areas, where matters are somewhat different. Here the situation is complex, but one may venture a few guesses. In the first place, let us distinguish between those

who served in the German army during the First World War, and those who were at that time too young for military service. I have a feeling that while the first group is given to boasting of deeds of prowess performed under the very eyebrows of Hindenburg, they are suspicious of the Nazis and usually convinced that Germany ought under no circumstances to have gone to war again. For most of them the front was a living hell, and they have an uneasy suspicion that the doctrines of Hitler on the subject of war and conquest are just romantic balderdash. But matters seem to be different with those who were young while the conflict was in progress, or who lived through the inflation or under the surveillance of the armies of occupation. Here one often encounters addiction to German hopes of conquest, and finds the idea of taking up arms against Hitler and for the United States repugnant. Many of this group refuse to believe even the most amply authenticated reports of Nazi cruelty. They stress instead the sufferings once visited upon Germany, and these they attribute to everybody except the Germans.

It must be conceded that little was done here before the war broke out to enlist the sympathies of these people for the democratic cause. I remember a strapping Bavarian who received in 1934 a letter smuggled out of Germany, and who thereupon made a trip overseas to consult his "monarch," Crown Prince Rupprecht. When he returned (with amazing credentials), he was aflame with zeal to organize in America some kind of rescue expedition which would, if need arose, blow Hitler off the map. Nobody paid the slightest attention to him. Possibly his plan was bizarre, but what a source of anti-Nazi propaganda activity he could have been! Our collective attitude in those days was to call Hitler names and let it go at that.

COMMON GROUND

Many of the newer German immigrants were consequently duck soup for Nazi propagandists. They were sent quantities of literature, nicely printed and illustrated. Some radio stations broadcasting in German likewise exuded more or less subtle versions of the Hitlerian gospel. The agents of Hitler had money and time. His enemies had neither.

Yet few of these Germans were actually converted to Nazism. Those who were joined the Bund and similar organizations. The others tried to salvage their amour propre behind professions of skepticism concerning what the newspapers reported. Often they, as thousands of other Americans, read what Father Coughlin and similar gullible nitwits had to say. The plight of the refugees usually found them indifferent. Why, they would ask, was anti-Semitism any business of theirs? Today this group has retired into a variety of shells. Literally hundreds of recent immigrants residing in such cities as New York see absolutely nobody. They live utterly alone in order to avoid suspicion and also to nurse what they would not admit are wounds. It is doubtful whether, if they continue to act in this fashion, they will survive the war psychologically intact.

Matters are quite different if one turns to labor and encounters conscious trade unionists with a German background. Here there is much more awareness of what Hitler has done to Germany, and in particular to labor. Most of the men and women in this group have long since made up their minds that this is the country they want to live in; they are anxious to pull an oar for Uncle Sam. Often they are eager to prove that just because one was born in Germany he can render some especially valuable service to the United States. Of course there is active in this

group a desire to help rebuild Germany on a democratic foundation, once the war is over. They are appalled at loose talk about what is to be done to their relatives and friends after Hitler's defeat. Wanting the Fuehrer's head on a platter as much as anybody else, they would not relish seeing too many heads served up as garnish. I have received quite a few letters from German Americans in this group; many contain comments and suggestions which show their authors are concerned and thoughtful. Of course this is not to say that everything is as it should be among those of German descent in labor circles. Some are tainted with Nazism. Others do not understand the situation. Still others flirt with revolutionary doctrines almost as undesirable as Hitlerism itself. But, on the whole, there is little to worry about.

Finally one should not ignore the intellectual wing of German America. Here there is sadness, but the disorder and confusion of 1918 are absent. The principal reason this is so is no doubt due to the presence of so many refugees. Being for the most part an educated lot, the refugees speak the German language well and retain an interest in German thought and literature. Their children normally cherish a desire to complete an education begun abroad; and their eagerness to learn something more about Goethe and Schiller, Rilke and Thomas Mann, is a source of constant delight (and naturally also of security) for their teachers. I happen to be stationed at a college for women which is host to many such young people. They seem determined not to surrender the German tradition to Hitler, even though their concrete memories of Germany are often painful in the extreme. Some current cultural phenomena are really extraordinary. Thus a refugee poet, Ivan Heilbut, has published in New York a volume

THOSE OF GERMAN DESCENT

of German verse so meritorious that I read the book with genuine amazement. It seems to me that never before in American history has so authentic a German poet made his debut in the New World. Perhaps one of the principal functions of the great migrations from the Third Reich will be to erect some kind of cultural bridge which will connect the German past with what we may term, despite manifold misgivings and many worries, the Fourth Reich. Just now, alas, what the spectator notices most is the lack of agreement, or even elementary friendliness, which sunders one important group of refugees from another.

On the whole, I think the morale of those who trace their family strains back to Germany is far from being good. On the other hand, save for a relatively small number of people the "German American question" has ceased to be a matter of great importance.

I often wish it were otherwise. It could be otherwise with profit. For if those of German descent took their ties seriously

and reckoned with the problem of Hitlerism as peculiarly their own—making the "German" of "German American" an active and positive democratic force in this world struggle—much might well be different from what it is now. There are some indications that this is gradually dawning on leaders in a number of German American organizations. If these do rally, the hour may still be not too late. The ground would have been prepared for a psychological warfare effort vastly more effective than the display of unrealistic verbal fireworks now being propelled toward Germany by radio and other media. The German Americans would be giving the war effort their enthusiastic support rather than their lukewarm acquiescence, and by so doing would give our conception of a viable, democratic post-war Germany bones and a bit of flesh.

George N. Shuster, president of Hunter College, is chairman of the Board of Directors of the Loyal Americans of German Descent.

HANS AND MAGDA MEET THE WAR

BARBARA PARMELEE

FOR few groups in this country is tragedy now so ever present as for our American citizens of German birth. It wakes with them to the alarm clock in the dim dawn. It clothes them as they dress. They drink it with their morning coffee. They breathe it with the air of day and lie down beside it in their beds at night. Their tragedy has nothing to do with loyalty—a heavy percentage of such citizens will be unquestionably loyal to the land they have sworn to protect and cherish—but with emotion born of long, long memories and the magnetic pull of the blood. As Louis Adamic has pointed out in *Two-Way Passage*, you can scratch an American of British stock unrenewed since 1620 and uncover a 17th century Englishman hot to seize a gun and rush to the defense of London and Coventry. What can we expect to find beneath the thin new American skin of the German who came to us as an adult with mingled hope and regret, with mind and purpose set toward the future but roots set fast in the past?

I know one case history intimately. It is a record of mental suffering that has turned a gay and friendly woman into a tormented stranger uncertain of her welcome. I tell it as one more reminder that we need steady tongues and cool heads in these days as well as eyes and ears sharp for signs of treachery.

She was born in Breslau in Silesia, and she has been a citizen only some twenty years, since her marriage. She is an ample-

bosomed, large-featured woman with dark eyes quick for laughter, black hair, and a skin like milk and roses. Hans, her husband, affectionately known as "dot leetle shrimp," is a balding kobold, an American of forty years' standing, with a German accent still rich and thick, a retired marine engineer with a good service record in the United States Navy in the other war. After Versailles he made persistent annual journeys back to Breslau with an offer of marriage until he persuaded his buxom Magda to say *leb'wohl* to Silesia and come to New England as his wife.

Hans is aggressively American. He changed their German name from Müller to Miller and permitted Magda no German-language newspaper from the minute the sole of her shoe touched Boston pavement. She was going to be an American: she must read English or nothing. But the process of her Americanization was slow, and half her heart turned ever to Germany. He is an American by design; she, more or less by accident.

They have been our neighbors here in the New England countryside for ten years. Knowing Magda was at first pure delight. Her struggles with order and shades of meaning in the English language were utterly diverting. "Ach, Missus," she would say to me in dissatisfaction with her abundant figure, "by me"—with an indicating pat—"comes it too much out behind." Or she would explain the medicinal nature of their sizeable cellar: she kept it for a

HANS AND MAGDA MEET THE WAR

time "venn my hossbind eat someding not becoming to him."

Her immaculate house was a German middle-class paradise. It contained beds deep in feathers, molded smooth as a pound of butter; magenta rugs carefully shaded from the sun; wallpaper invented by a designer in a cheese dream; vases of garish paper lilies; table linen with bouncing big pansies three times life size and colored to scale; bowls of lurid wax oranges and pale bananas of the hue of a very dead cadaver. "Zee, Missus," she would say proudly, pointing out a livid green plush cushion with a painted scene, "deer im Harz Mountains. Ach in Zhair-many it iss beautiful!"

Christmas was for her a spangled German holiday of red ribbon and tinsel. She made beaming journeys about the neighborhood bearing gifts of *Mohnkuchen*, dark and rich with poppyseed paste, and *Streuselkuchen*—"Crump cake, Missus,"—whose golden-brown deliciousness would tax the ecstatic vocabulary of a radio plugger.

A shopping trip with her was a day at the circus. Sometimes she bought with native thrift and caution. More often she remembered her German family's life savings, vanished forever in the inflation, and, determined to have something for her money while a dollar was still a hundred cents, she stocked up with a giddy recklessness. "Because dey wair so reason-able" she bought orphan garments that did not fit, and spent the next few days going about the community trying to find good homes for these derelicts. Of sweet chocolate she could never buy enough. That cloying delicacy was a strong argument in favor of America. In Germany it had been *Luxusartikel*; here it was *Konsumartikel*. She could not be certain that its economic status would remain quo; so she would stack her pantry shelves

high with it, and then, since she could not possibly eat all her plunder before it went white at the edges, she would distribute it as open-handed largesse to all the children on the street. Our boy and girl, eager recipients at first, came to a time when they turned faintly green at the mention of the word chocolate.

Like many women of late and childless marriages, Magda was devoted to children. Her shopping trips furnished toys as well as chocolate for the neighborhood moppets. But her eye's apple was her nephew in Germany, her brother's son, an only child, a blond and Nordic lad, well-built and handsome. When he was nine years old, he sent her a small phonograph disk with a greeting in his voice.



She bought a recorder—"von Sears, Missus," with a gesture toward the mail-order catalog—and gave me a hearing. A treble shrill as the piping of froglets in the spring said "Guten Morgen, Tante Magda," continued with remarks about how much German boys like to play with

COMMON GROUND

lead soldiers, and finished with the assurance that the Fuehrer saluted her. Magda sent an electric train as a return gift and ached to go back to the fatherland to see the boy in the flesh.

The Millers were good neighbors. "Vee make no trouble, Missus." They were co-operative and kindly, and never in the way. We enjoyed the constant amiable bickering between Magda and the leetle shrimp, the good belly laughter that resounded in their garden on summer nights.

We could never take offense even at Magda's sharp criticisms of America with Germany as a standard of excellence. Her remarks were concerned mostly with domestic economy or social custom, and were either just or understandable. In Zhairmany housewives took empty "yam yars" back to the market to be refilled instead of wastefully piling them in ash barrels for the "yunkman." In Zhairmany were no shameful heaps of carrion automobiles rotting in the sun; old cars were all thriftily poured back into a melting pot and made into new ones. In Zhairmany, Magda was sure, no bathing beauty strolled about in a suit so short "dot it show bot' her behinds." In Zhairmany many things were better as America. In Zhairmany it was *beautiful*. She was probably correct.

We didn't see so much of Hans as of Magda, but what we saw we liked immensely. He was an industrious beaver, cutting and leveling their tangled woodlot into a precise park, building bird houses, painting, puttying, growing a high midsummer pomp of dahlias, zinnias, marigolds, and petunias in colors to curdle the cream. He was usually conveyed by all the neighborhood dogs, who worshiped him on sight. He shied off from anything like formal visiting, pre-

ferring to dodge me and drop around in old clothes to talk with Jim while he set beanpoles or transplanted clethra from the woods. As a marine engineer, Hans had been everywhere, Jim learned—Africa, South America, Japan, the Malay States. He had picked out America as home because he was a bit of an individualist with quiet ideas of his own for which he didn't mean to have to account to anybody. On the Fourth of July he bought Roman candles, rockets, and pinwheels, and determinedly celebrated his independence along with ours.

Political changes in Germany bothered our neighbors little at first. "In Europe," Magda declared gaily, "iss it all Hit or Muss." Later she considered gravely and said that Hitler "maybe for vorking people iss some good." Then she began to dodge the subject. We understood. What if we were living in Europe and had to look back shamefacedly at a beloved America in the unclean clutches of Huey Long?

After a time the shape of things to come began to cast a shadow, and Magda's laughter rang out infrequently. First it was her sister. The sister's husband, a civil servant, had to resign his position long before pension age, "because of ill healt'," Magda reported doubtfully. The aging couple would have the merest nothing to live on. Magda began to scheme. She bought dresses for her sister and tacked in soiled shields and crumpled collars in an effort to make new look old. She bought stockings, washed them, and set small neat darns in the toes and heels. But her innocent chicanery did not deceive Nazi customs officials. "Dey are zo nozey, Missus. It is nossing vort'. My zister haf to pay such a duty! She zay she cannot afford dot I should zend her t'ings." Magda scrimped on her housekeeping money and clothes budget and sent cash. The leetle shrimp contributed

HANS AND MAGDA MEET THE WAR

generously. But the Millers' means, though comfortable, would not support two families.

Magda's brother seemed to be rising; but his prosperity caused the Millers no rejoicing. He gave no apparent help to the needy sister. It looked as though Magda's family were politically divided, that the aging sister, who had mothered both Magda and her brother, would have to sink or swim with Magda's help alone.

It must have been 1936 when the brother wrote that he was coming to America on business and would bring the ambrosial nephew, now eleven. Magda was transported. Her joy, unfortunately, was brief. Before the travelers could leave Germany, new word came: Herr Althaus would make the journey alone. The boy, Magda said sorrowfully, was too young to go on the water. Would we pretend to swallow this, or would we burst out impatiently with the cutting truth, that there was now no possible escape from Germany for ambrosial lads, that all must goose-step to the dance of death? Since we were silent, Magda resolutely put her problem behind her and told another whopper. The boy was going to be "yust like Boy Scouts"; he was going into the *Hitler Jugend*. Intelligent Magda had begun to insult her own intelligence. She was perpetually assuring herself that all was well in Germany, constantly refusing, with the Scarlett O'Hara philosophy of most women, to meet an unpleasant situation squarely until life rammed it down her throat.

Herr Althaus' visit was fleeting. We learned from Magda that he said "*Heil Hitler*" instead of "Good morning," and that he was displeased when they laughed. "He take it all qvite zeerioos." We learned also that Herr Althaus enjoyed privileges. At a time when run-of-the-mill Germans abroad were allowed the barest subsistence money, Magda's brother was

well supplied with cash. She helped him buy American goods in quantity to take home to his family. We felt uneasy about his lengthy "business" in New York. Yet there was little to indicate any ominous undercurrent, and Magda's ingenuous account did not seem to hide the beginnings of Nazi compulsion. At any rate, we did not think that Hans would flatten easily under pressure.

Back from Germany came more snapshots of the boy and a highly-colored scrapbook for Tante Magda, filled with familiar photographs of the Fuehrer's compelling gaze and warning finger, of the Fuehrer fulsomely reviewing storm troopers, of blond *Deutsche Mädel* strewing the Fuehrer's path with roses. Magda hoped timidly "dot it vill not be var. My bruder zay dot Hitler make all tings fine. My zister—" She paused. Then she put an anxious question. "It iss terrible vat dey do to Yews in Zhairmany, don't it?" Her eyes begged me to assure her that the papers exaggerated. It was pull devil, pull baker, for Magda, and the pulls were tougher every day.

But when Hitler struck down Poland and war burst over Europe, Magda made a declaration. She was confident she had solved her personal problem. "Me, I am for all peoples—Polish, Zhairmans, English, und Americans. Me, I stay neutral. I vant only peace for eferybody." Then her sturdy voice lost its assurance. "But, Missus, I hope dey don't bomb London. For den dey vill bomb Berlin!"

I made a statement, too, just to have things clear. I said we had been Americans for three hundred years, and before that we were English, that democracy was in our blood, that the life we believed in would survive or die with England. "Ja," agreed Magda soberly, "you haf to tink vat you tink—but," she added with a bit of edge, "for you iss easy to decide."

The invasion of Holland and Belgium

COMMON GROUND

left our neighbors gasping. "Ach, Missus, we vair so shocked!" The leetle shrimp shook a furious fist. "I hope dem Dutch and Belgiums smosh dem!" Magda gave him a dark look. The rock-firm answer she had found for her trouble swayed dangerously in her mind, but she clung to it, trying to reconcile her good humanity with her love for a Germany that was gone.

One day she came to make three bleak announcements: "My zister iss dett. My bruder iss called oop. De boy, he go soon. I haf to tell somebody, Missus." She waited long enough to hear empty words of attempted comfort, and then turned bitterly toward home.

As the turmoil spread nearer our shores, the Millers began to disagree. Magda told us indignantly, "My hossbind, he vant vonce again to yoin de Nafey. I zay to him ven he do dot, zo iss he mine



enemy. Und he zay quiet, 'Zo? Now I know!!' Und I zay, 'I am for all peoples. I am neutral! I stay neutral! Ven you shoot Zhairmans, zo are you mine enemy!'" The wrath left her voice and she quavered, "Ach, Missus, our nerfs are all on etch! Not efen can ve go to pic-

tures. Always iss it var, var, var! Und I vill not look!"

Hans sought us privately. He doubled his fists. "If I vas ten years younger, I'd roon away to choin de Nafey and let de voomin growl!"

When Pearl Harbor pitched America neck and crop into the war, Magda was silent. She avoided us for a week or so. Then we dropped in to see if Hans would join a local defense class. "Dot leetle old man!" cried Magda. "Vot can he do?" But, although she dodged a direct meeting of eyes, she made no further objection. Her neutrality, her world, were going to pieces.

The leetle shrimp accepted our suggestion with a bound. He dug out his shotgun and put it through its paces. "If any of dem fellers comes down here in balloons, it take a lot of hay to ploog de holes I dr-rill in dem!" Magda angrily turned her back on him. But she did so only to think of a new woe. She wailed. "Ach, Missus, your Bill, your leetle Bill dot I measure here yoost so high on de kitchen door ven ve first come—Bill dot I cry about ven he go college—Bill vill haf to go to var! It iss de Götterdämmerung!"

Hans had finished his warden's course when I saw her next, and they had made blackout screens. She showed them to me; and for the first time I saw tears. "Zee, Missus! Clot' dat I buy in Zhairmany years ago! Now I use it against Zhairman, bombers here."

The need for blackout screens and kindred precautions brewed new trouble for Hans and Magda. As I was leaving the Red Cross sewing room in the Town Hall late one afternoon, Mary Arthur, the wife of the local defense chairman, called after me. "Wait a minute. I want to talk to you." She caught up with me and lowered her voice. "How much do you

HANS AND MAGDA MEET THE WAR

know about those Millers who live across the street from you?"

"A lot," I answered. "They're all right. What about 'em?"

"Hattie Mears called Don up last night and said she wanted him to get the FBI after them. She says they're Bund members. I don't know where she got her information. As far as that goes, I don't know where she ever gets it."

"The Millers are better citizens than Hattie Mears!" I flared. "They wouldn't touch the Bund. Hans wasn't born to American citizenship like Hattie: he picked it out from all the citizenships in the world! And he served for it all through the last war. Magda is bruised and bewildered because she has folks in Germany, but she'd no more commit an overt act than you or I. What does Hattie Mears know about them, anyway? She's never set foot in their house. She must be raising a dust because of the hundred pounds of sugar in her cellar and because of her precious one-chicken son, who got Mama's permission to marry only when the Draft bill loomed."

"Hold on, hold on," laughed Mary. "I'll tell Don. He hasn't sent for J. Edgar Hoover yet."

I walked on fuming. Hattie Mears' squat, busybody figure, her beaky face with its dangling three-inch earrings, her macaw voice, were bad enough when she was minding her own affairs. Now the thought of them was infuriating. I was lucky to come upon John Perry, the chief warden, planting potatoes in his victory garden. "Do you remember that Jim recommended Hans Miller as a proper warden," I asked, "and told you not to worry about his German accent? Well, do you know what Hattie Mears is up to?"

"No," John grinned. "My wife hasn't come home from Red Cross yet."

"Hattie thinks she's a local Martin

Dies. She's out to make trouble for the Millers, who are two innocent people. Jim told you Hans has a good service record from the other war. Hans is as right-minded a citizen as your Bunker Hill great-great-great grandfather."

"I've talked with him now and then," said John quietly. "He's all right. Tell Hattie to keep her shirt on."

"I'll be charmed," I answered.

But when I got home, Jim wouldn't let me tell Hattie. "You cool for a while," he said. "If you get that old biddy sore, she'll have Hans and Magda in a concentration camp before the week's out. You cool, and keep on cooling."

"But I don't want to appease Hattie. I want to squash her!"

"It would be a pleasure, but you can't have it. You're dealing with a dangerous gossip who is also a fool. It will be wise to tell her how nice she is. When you think you're ready, I'll bring you a pat of butter."

"Butter?"

"Yeah. And don't let it melt in your mouth."

I called Hattie on the telephone and told her how distressed I was to hear she'd been upset, particularly when, all the time, I could have smoothed her anxieties with a word. Our neighbors, about whom she had been fearsome, were true blue. We could guarantee them. So, I thought, would the chief warden. I was so happy to be able to relieve her completely of any nagging suspicion. And if anybody brought her any more doubtful tales about the Millers, I wanted her to spend not a minute's worry on them but send the suspicion-mongers directly to me. She was not to fret one bit more. Everything was absolutely all right. She could sleep in peace.

Hattie of-coursed and what-I-meant and said she was glad. Maybe she was. That, we thought, was that.

COMMON GROUND

But when, the next day, Jim asked Hans to make one of a carful of wardens to go to a special lecture at the Grange Hall, Hans ducked his head and muttered something about having on that night to meet "the Town ovicials." Jim came home to grab a hat and set off to see the Moderator. "I don't think Hans wants me to know what's up, and I didn't see Magda. But the Town must be going to have an investigation. I'll do what I can to spike it. I don't want Hans to think what he read on the base of the Statue of Liberty is a damn lie."

He came home cheerful. "Fire's all out. Hattie set a three-alarm blaze before you snuffed her, though, and they have to do something. Cap Hill will talk with Hans, just the Cap and nobody else."

It was all right. For Cap Hill is that incredible person, a chief of police with brains and sense and integrity. His was the indomitable purpose that found, in spite of threats and attempted coercion, the leak in the WPA funds and inexorably fixed the guilt. But he is also the wise official who never gives the Town's delinquent boys a police record unless he has to. He mothers them along with personal reports to him and has the satis-

faction of knowing that at least one of his reclaimed charges is now flying a bomber in New Guinea in the service of his country. Hans would be safe with Cap Hill. The defense rested.

So Hans, with a clean bill of citizenship, wears his warden's arm band proudly and zealously patrols his post when the blackout sirens wail. But Magda uneasily tends her spotless house and kneads the dough for *Mohnkuchen*. She knows that she and Hans have been suspect. She doesn't know where the trouble came from, or how it was stopped, or when it may come again. She hears the coast patrol zoom over her head in the ceaseless deadly watch against her former countrymen and still searches for an answer to her tragic question. No one can help her much. Our world today is a hard place for the decent, kindly Magda Millers. There must be many of them.

Barbara Parmelec is the pseudonym of a New England writer whose articles have appeared in the New Republic. Under her own name she is the author of several textbooks and stories for children.

The illustrator is Kurt Werth.

DEMOCRACY IN RELOCATION

DILLON S. MYER

THE greatest involuntary migration in the history of the United States has been completed. Within the space of a few months, some 110,000 men, women, and children of Japanese ancestry, about two-thirds of them American citizens, have been moved from their homes in the western portions of the country. After temporary residence in assembly centers, they now are living in ten relocation centers between the Mississippi River and the high Sierras.

This mass evacuation shatters all precedent so far as this nation is concerned.

But evacuation was a step which seemed necessary to help insure the safety of our western shore against an enemy who looked like these people and who had taken advantage of the situation to infiltrate the Japanese population of our West Coast with his agents. Even the people of Japanese ancestry who were loyal to the United States could not always detect the enemy agents in their midst.

The authority to cause the evacuation was, and is, one of the wartime powers of the President, which he delegated to the Secretary of War, and which was re-delegated to the Commanding General of the Western Defense Command. The same authority has been given to other military commanders. One of these military officers could order the evacuation of any other persons, individually, or in groups—if he determined that such evacuation was necessary to the security of

the nation and to the defense of the area in his command.

The exclusion order, which called for all persons of Japanese ancestry to leave the western portions of Washington, Oregon, California, and the southern part of Arizona (later all of California was included in the area to be evacuated), was issued on March second of this year. The evacuated persons might leave when they liked and go to any place outside the area to be evacuated. As might have been anticipated, they were slow to move. Most of the Japanese and their American-born children and grandchildren always had lived in the coastal states and were at a loss to know where to go. It took time to make arrangements for disposing of businesses, farms, and homes. Many made no effort to move. So it became apparent that voluntary evacuation within a short period of time was doomed to failure, not only because of reluctance to go but because the movement of more than 100,000 people into new communities was bound to cause trouble.

The Japanese Americans for the most part have lived in colonies in this country, and some attempted to move in groups. Some of these group moves were successful, but in other instances the residents of the communities resented the migration and let their resentment be known in no uncertain terms. Officials of most of the western states refused to be responsible for law and order if the evacuees came into their states as unrestricted

COMMON GROUND

residents. This combination of situations pointed to two things: first, evacuation must be placed on an orderly basis; and, second, the evacuated persons must be provided with homes which would offer security and opportunities for work until orderly processes of relocation could be made effective.

On March 29, just 27 days after evacuation was begun, voluntary evacuation was halted, and planned and systematic evacuation began. Area by area, evacuees left their homes when they were ordered by authorities to do so. Temporary quarters were provided hurriedly by the military, while a search was made for other places where evacuees might live and work until such time as they might be reabsorbed into society. The temporary quarters, provided by the Wartime Civil Control Administration, were called assembly centers, 14 in number, all located in the area to be evacuated. In a few weeks 10 other sites were chosen for relocation centers into which the evacuated persons would be moved as soon as accommodations could be provided. These are in eastern California, Arizona, Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, and Arkansas, for the most part on publicly owned land which has possibilities of development for agriculture and other enterprises.

The War Relocation Authority has responsibility for the welfare of the evacuees after they have been removed from the assembly centers to these relocation centers. This is a responsibility not to be taken lightly, for on the conduct of the relocation program as a whole rest the future attitudes of some 110,000 persons, including about 70,000 American citizens.

If the evacuees are permitted to live in a manner as nearly normal as possible, with responsibility for the management of the communities in which they live, with educational opportunities, with a

chance to develop initiative, and with reason to look forward to a better day, then there is a probability that they may be retained as contributing members of a democratic society.

II

As this is written, nine of the ten relocation centers have at least a portion of their residents, and four are fully populated. The process of relocation is scheduled to be completed before this appears in print. It may be in order to consider the manner in which the residents of these new communities, communities which are new to this nation, are living.

In certain respects, life in relocation centers is not unlike life in any other community. In other respects, for reasons of economy and efficiency of administration and because of the temporary nature of the centers, conditions are necessarily different.

Housing is on the pattern of Army "Theatre of Operations" type of construction: barrack-type buildings, 100 feet long by 20 feet wide, usually divided into four compartments, 20 by 25 feet. Some of the single men live in barracks without the compartment divisions. The buildings are arranged in blocks, with a dining hall, bath house, and recreation hall to each block, to serve the needs of 275 to 300 people. The feeding problem, purchasing, distribution, and preparation of food is handled much like Army mess. Everyone eats in dining halls, and the menus are planned as a compromise between the tastes of the aliens, who have a preference for Oriental dishes, and their American-born children and grandchildren who prefer American-type foods. Families live together, but it is not feasible at present to provide for individual family feeding.

Almost all the families, of course, had

DEMOCRACY IN RELOCATION

household goods. Put in storage at government expense at the time of evacuation, it is now being sent to the owners at relocation centers as rapidly as possible, so that each family may have its own furniture.

Clothing is provided within certain maximum limits. It is up to each family to determine what clothing will be bought within the limits of the allowance.

The community stores are to be operated as co-operative enterprises, by an association to which any evacuee resident of the community may belong. The co-operative association chooses its own officers who determine what kinds of shops, stores, and other enterprises will be undertaken, and how the profits will be distributed, in accordance with the laws of the state in which it is incorporated. The staff of the War Relocation Authority audits the books at intervals, but the management is entirely in the hands of the evacuees themselves, and of course there is an abundance of merchandising experience and skills upon which they may draw. In most centers, whose population ranges from 7,000 to 18,000, the co-operative association elects to establish one or more "general stores" which sell soft drinks, ice cream, usually a few items of groceries, clothing, shoes, tobacco, candy, toilet articles, and other items not supplied to the evacuees by the administration of the center, and a shoe repair shop, barber shop, and beauty parlor. A newspaper is also a standard enterprise to meet the needs of the community.

The newspaper stands as one of the notable evidences of democracy in the center. Once the paper has been established as a community enterprise under evacuee management and control, the editorial staff has complete freedom of expression except for the restrictions against libel and personal attack which limit the activities of the press anywhere.

Organizations of many kinds are permitted. Since the Issei, or Japanese-born people, usually do not speak English well, their meetings are held in the Japanese tongue, if they desire.

There is freedom of worship. Services are conducted regularly by members of Buddhist, Catholic, and most of the Protestant faiths. Many of the ministers are evacuees, though Caucasian ministers come in from outside, representing their national church organizations.

In each relocation center schools have been established, with curricula which meet the standards of the state in which the center is located. The regular school system within the community covers the range from kindergarten through high school; other educational activities go beyond the usual school age limits, with day nurseries for the tiny ones, and an extensive program of adult education for persons beyond ordinary school age. Evacuee teachers are used to the fullest available extent, but approximately two-thirds of the teachers are Caucasians. The one major respect in which the curriculum in a relocation center school varies from other schools in the state is that more opportunity is provided for vocational education. The work activities provide laboratories for youngsters, particularly in high school, so they may obtain more than the usual amount of supervised experience in agriculture, carpentry, sewing, and other vocational activities.

The extent to which democracy is practiced in the relocation centers is represented best, perhaps, by the community government. While the administrative staff of necessity must have responsibility for such things as food, housing, employment, and agricultural production, the supervision of life in the community is left largely up to the evacuees themselves. The legislative body is a Council, with representatives chosen from each

COMMON GROUND

block. All residents of the center 18 years of age and above may vote, but only American citizens 21 and older may hold elective office. Any one of voting age, however, may serve on committees or in appointive positions.

The regulations and laws of the community are established by the Community Council, and the "court" is a Judicial Commission, usually consisting of three persons, which sits in judgment on cases of violation of the community laws. Major offenses, such as felonies, are turned over to officials and courts outside.

Each relocation center has its own fire department and its own police, or "wardens" as the evacuees prefer to call them. The wardens are not armed, and their job for the most part is one of helping, rather than restricting, the residents of the community.

III

With the nation fighting for its life and needing the productive effort of every man and woman, it is unthinkable that the available manpower in the relocation centers should not be employed in productive effort of some kind. True, the Geneva Convention, governing treatment of enemy aliens, prevents the use of citizens of Japan in direct war work, but there are other ways in which their skills may be used. A fundamental objective of the administration of the relocation centers is to see that work opportunities are provided for everyone. During the early days of each center, this was rather difficult, but as time passes, more and more things are developed which mean jobs for more people.

One of the basic considerations in selecting sites for the relocation centers was the possibility of agricultural production. In some instances, part of the available land already was in production; other

land had to be cleared, or leveled; water had to be brought onto the land, or drained off. But with potentially productive soil, and with about half the population composed of farm people, agriculture is one of the great possibilities. About 2,700 acres of crops were planted and harvested in 1942 and several hundred acres of winter vegetables now are growing. Before the close of the production season in 1943, it seems likely that the relocation centers will produce all their own vegetables, all their eggs and poultry, and about half their meat requirements, largely in the form of pork and pork products. This, of course, will help reduce the public expense of operating the relocation centers. In addition to subsistence production, there are some agricultural commodities which can be produced to meet the needs of the nation as a whole: one of the centers is in the heart of the long-staple cotton area of Arizona; others are well suited to the production of sugar beet seed and vegetable seed, and some of the evacuated farmers are skilled in seed production.

Opportunities for the establishment of industries in which evacuees may work are being explored, and hold considerable promise. It is planned to establish some types of industries to manufacture goods needed by the evacuees themselves. Clothing and school furniture are two things which appear to be likely objects of manufacture at the present time. Early in the evacuation program, American citizens among the evacuees went to work weaving colored burlap into nets, to make camouflage screens for the Army. The long lists of materials needed by the Army and the Navy suggest other items which might be manufactured in relocation centers.

As this is written, one manufacturer who has a war contract is breaking ground for a factory building at one of the re-

DEMOCRACY IN RELOCATION

location centers. At first, about 120 evacuees will be employed and trained in a trade completely new to all of them. If the experiment is successful, the factory may be expanded to employ several times as many persons.

All evacuees at relocation centers are provided with food, lodging, and medical care. In addition, those who perform services for the community as a whole, such as the cooks, stenographers, farm workers, truck drivers, and timekeepers, receive nominal wages, or "cash advances" from the War Relocation Authority and clothing allowances for themselves and their dependents. The cash advances are \$12 for beginning workers, \$16 monthly for the majority of the workers, and \$19 monthly for those performing difficult, responsible, or professional tasks.

Those employed in enterprises run by the co-operative association receive wages and clothing allowances on the same scale, paid out of funds of the co-operative association. However, industries under private management established at or near the relocation centers to employ evacuee workers will pay the wages prevailing in the industry. Workers in these industries will reimburse the administration for the cost of subsistence for themselves and their families. It will be left to the evacuee community to determine whether those workers will keep all the remaining money, or whether everything above \$16 or \$19 monthly will be put into a general fund to be divided among all workers, those employed in community services as well as those who earn the higher wages. Thus far, there has been no opportunity for an evacuee community to cast a vote on the matter, but the first decision of this sort will be watched with a great deal of interest.

During the summer months, there was a serious shortage of labor in many parts of the country, and sugar beet growers

asked that groups of evacuees be permitted to leave the assembly and relocation centers to care for the growing beet crop. About 1,700 workers left the centers to work in the sugar beet fields. The locations in which they worked all were outside the evacuated area and, within limits, they traveled, lived, and worked without guard, just as any other group might have done. About 1,200 stayed outside the centers through the harvest season. When harvest time for sugar beets came, the demand for labor was even greater, and several thousand were permitted to leave the centers for this work. At the close of the season, they will return to the relocation centers. Several hundred other evacuees picked long-staple cotton in Arizona, living in the relocation center and going to and from the cotton fields daily. The total employment of evacuees in the harvesting of farm crops at this writing is over 7,600.

Before the workers went out of the centers to the sugar beet fields, there were certain conditions which had to be met: the employer agreed to provide satisfactory housing; and an official of the state or county agreed to be responsible for law and order. There were no serious incidents of any kind, and the workers met with the general approbation of their employers.

The success of this large-scale experiment suggests that as the supply of manpower in the nation grows smaller and the demand grows stronger, employers of many different kinds may request that persons now living in relocation centers be permitted to leave to take jobs. If that should become the case, the policies of the War Relocation Authority will permit such employment of individuals or groups. The evacuees now living in the relocation centers may leave the centers if certain conditions prevail:

COMMON GROUND

(a) if they have a definite place to go and means of support, outside of designated military areas; (b) if they agree to report any change of address; (c) if there is reasonable assurance of their acceptability in the community where they plan to go; and (d) if nothing in their records with official investigative agencies indicates they would constitute a danger to the security of the nation. The great majority of the 110,000 residents of the relocation centers will be able to meet these requirements, and so will be available for employment if needed and desired.

The success of this permanent, dispersed phase of relocation will be dependent on the sentiment of the public in general, and the sentiment of the evacuees. If evacuated persons will be accepted

by the public, and if the evacuees themselves are willing to try to establish themselves in communities outside the relocation centers, then genuine progress can be made in permanent relocation. The principles underlying public acceptance of the evacuees as individuals would seem to be closely allied to the things we are fighting for.

Dillon S. Myer, who succeeded M. S. Eisenhower as director of the War Relocation Authority in June, 1942, has spent virtually his entire adult life in government service, both in his home state of Ohio and in Washington. He served earlier with the AAA, the Soil Conservation Service, and the Department of Agriculture.

WHEN THE ALIENS LEFT

ERNEST L. MEYER

WE WERE talking the other day to a resident of our town, an American citizen who happened to have been born in Italy, a hard-working day laborer in a Bridgeport munitions plant.

He had two sons in the Army and another slated for service. Many of his friends and neighbors, also Italian Americans, are in defense work and have sons in the Army. Some of the fathers, through accident or negligence, have failed to become naturalized. Yet they are giving to our war effort their sons and their sinews.

Despite all this, he said sadly, they are still lumped as aliens, even as "undesirable foreigners," by certain strident Yankee pa-

triot. He was especially bitter about people like Congressman Martin Dies and Westbrook Pegler, both of whom have been fulminating about "America for the American-born." . . .

That night we had a dream.

We dreamed that Westbrook Pegler rubbed his magic lamp and the genie appeared and the genie said: "What is thy will, master?"

And Pegler answered: "It is my will that straightway all the aliens in America be exiled to some distant and inhospitable spot and there do sufferance for their sins."

And the genie said: "Truly I can grant thy wish, master, but there is a law in my

WHEN THE ALIENS LEFT

land which says that whosoever is sent into exile shall be allowed to take with him whatever he has created by his own efforts. This is, I think, a just law, and if you abide by it, I can grant your desire."

And Pegler said: "Indeed, your law is quite just. Let the aliens be deported, and let them take with them what they have created, for surely they have fashioned nothing but dissent and plots and labor racketeering and radical heresies and sins and sabotage. And to these they are welcome."

And the genie said: "So be it, master." And he uttered a few words of strange power and a miracle happened.

It followed on that very instant that a vast fleet of barges and boats was fashioned, and into them, millions upon millions, flocked the aliens, and they took with them what they had created in America.

They took the highways hewn out of the wilderness by Sicilians and Slavs, and great rafts of lumber felled in the forests by the Irish, the Swedes, the Norwegians, and many millions of square miles of earth made fertile by the Germans, the Swiss, the Danes, and the Dutch, and billions of garments woven by the Jews, and mountainous masses of coal dug from the pits by the Italians and Finns and Poles, and

whole cities of skyscrapers and subways and railroads and mills and marts wrought by the sinews of many aliens from the four quarters of the world when the call went out that America needed immigrants to make America great.

And they took with them also their alien culture, their music and their songs, their languages and their literature, their books and their Bibles, their cookery, their piety and their passions, their ideals and philosophy and folk dances and fun, which had been woven into the rich and multi-colored fabric of America.

And a great want followed, and a great and strange silence.

And in that silence there was naught to be heard save the frightened whimpering of Westbrook Pegler, who gazed over the barren landscape robbed of highways and railroads and forests and cities and fertile farms. And Pegler cried: "Genie! Genie!"

But there was no answer, for the genie, an alien, was on one of the deportation boats to Bagdad.

And after that there was nothing, and the night.

Ernest L. Meyer for six years conducted a daily column, "As the Crow Flies," for the New York Post. He is now editing the Westport, Connecticut, Town Crier.

TOPSOIL AND BIBLES

PAUL B. SEARS

IT takes good land to sustain a good people. There is not too much good land anywhere in the world, not even in our own rich nation. Much of its surface cannot be farmed. Much that was tolerable has been ruined, and too much even of our best land has suffered from lack of the proper care. On the average, about one-third of our topsoil—the rich thin layer which produces crops—has been lost by erosion that could have been prevented.

It takes men and women of strong character and self-discipline to husband the soil, maintain it, and improve it. They must have a sense of stewardship and continuity. They must feel that the same land which feeds them will have to feed their children and their children's children, so long as men shall last.

There are no more uncrowded continents where men with guns and steel can march in and displace, destroy, or enslave men less powerfully equipped, and grow fat upon new lands. The world, made round to navigators by Magellan, is now round and continuous for every one of us. We can no longer postpone the obligation to sit down where we are and establish a going order, containing within itself the implicit guarantee of order to come.

War makes this more urgent than ever before. War is not merely the destruction of treasure and lives. It is the destruction too of natural resources. The minerals which cause the soil to produce are precisely those for which, in the form of explosives and other essentials, war is most

greedy—nitrogen, phosphorus, potash, and sulphur, for example.

This war, in particular, must bring stewardship sharply to our minds. For we are pitted against two powerful nations who have taken better care of meager resources than we have of our own more abundant stores. We must not confuse the perversion and corruption of these people with their massive and authentic folk-strength. We cannot defeat them unless we match their realism with our own. We must somehow match the skill and character which have enabled them to build virile populations from their soil.

Perhaps this sounds as though the man who farms must have something close to a religious conviction of his duty. It should. That is precisely what I mean. When I began, a number of years ago, to look over the United States in search of areas where the landscape was in a healthy condition, I was struck by two things. First, most of these communities were made up of foreign-born farmers or their descendants who had preserved the tradition; second, most of them were bound together by pretty strong bonds of faith, or at least of morale. I might add that none of these groups were so much interested in short cuts to salvation as in emphasis upon duty—a most unpopular word generally.

Today, thanks to the statesmanship of some of our less spectacular leaders, the ranks of these good farmers are being augmented by young men and women who

have been trained and encouraged in school and community to love the land. Whatever their ancestry, they are distinctly an American product. Some of them come from families which have misused the land for generations, some from homes of thrift and skill. It is their responsibility to take over the best of the old practices which have been preserved by groups of foreign origin and refine them in the light of scientific knowledge.

II

In whatever state you live, you will find oases of well-managed land, but by no means enough of them. They are, perhaps, expanding, but not fast enough. Once the land is impoverished, poor nutrition, lack of capital, and the general drainage away of energy start the whole system into a downward spiral from which recovery is all but impossible.

Yet it is amazing what even one man can do. I am thinking of the Italian priest, Father Ligutti, of Granger, Iowa. He was described to me by a mutual friend as "the kind of Italian who, if the Devil gets him, would be terrible. But if God gets him, he would be what he is." I have never met the good father, but if he sees this, I trust he will understand that I consider it one of the finest tributes to a man's personality and power that I ever heard.

At any rate Father Ligutti found a group of coal miners who were in great distress and want. As in many coal fields there was not enough work to go around, or to keep men employed enough of the time to supply the ordinary wants of existence. He got them interested in helping themselves by means of part-time farming and gardening. Wisely he settled them on the best land for which he could secure credit for them. He helped them literally build their own community of decent houses. He guided them in thrift, in the production of wholesome food from

their gardens, poultry, fruit, and cattle.

While they were getting on their feet, he somehow convinced them it was not cheaper to buy a thing than to produce it. Thus running counter to a great deal of most persuasive advertising, he achieved a considerable miracle. For a time, I am told, they ground wheat in little hand coffee mills, and I know that they preserved fruits and vegetables with second-hand canning equipment which the enterprising father had recommended to his friends as a good community buy. Today this group—it contains Protestants as well as Catholics—is a going concern, self-sustaining and self-respecting.

For contrast I think of a group of Norwegians who settled in Texas about 1850. They passed over the then rich black cotton land with its great houses—now fallen upon evil days. Instead they sought the limestone hills. I suppose the rock seemed more like home, and I'm pretty certain they knew that lime makes strong-boned men and beasts. These hills they handled with the same care that makes the farms of Norway such a delight, and they remain beautiful today.

Instead of emulating their neighbors down the valley who tried to plow up as much land as possible, these Lutheran folk plowed only the best and most level. The sloping hillsides were kept in fenced pastures and each plot was given a chance to rest from heavy grazing. Thus there was an abundance of pasture at all times. The hilltops were kept in wood instead of being hacked bare.

From the beginning, as today, a cardinal principle has been to buy nothing the land will produce. Cash return is a rather secondary to living from the land. Yet, curious paradox, every member of the community has cash in the bank while the cotton farmers below, whose whole emphasis is upon cash production, are in poverty.

COMMON GROUND

And these Norwegians live a decent life. They have their own music and comfortable modern homes. Their sons and daughters go to good schools, and often come back home to live afterwards. They are, although remote from a railroad, a part of modern America. They brought with them a good tradition and kept it, to interweave it with the best that we have.

Such, too, are the Mennonites and Amish, whose customs, costumes, and faith are survivals of late medieval Protestant Europe. They are hard-working and resistant to modern mechanical luxuries. By no means impervious to new ideas, they preserve the old in quaint and vivid phrase. "A big barn will build a good house"; "There's money in the manure pile"; "My boy's got book-learnin' enough"; "I'd sooner lost my best cow as my woman—she was such a good old booger to work"; "Every dinner ought to have seven sweets and seven sour." Such sayings give more than a glimpse of their way of life.

From Texas to Minnesota can be found farm communities centering about Lutheran or Catholic or Reformed or so-called Congregational churches. The more urban faiths of the Industrial Revolution seem not to play so great a role, although here and there are younger ministers of these denominations who are devoted to rural work. Like the Lutheran pastor I met in Texas, they would not scorn to carry improved soybean seeds along with their Bibles.

III

Actually, the United States is as cosmopolitan outside of city limits as it is within. If we seldom notice that fact, it is because our farms spread over an area of about two billion acres. Two billion acres is a great deal of land—enough to give each of us about 15 acres apiece, although only half of it, or thereabouts, is on farms.

Upon this two billion acres are to be found representatives of all races and most nations of mankind, growing plants from every continent, and using methods to which the whole world has made contribution. The best of this farmland is our most essential natural resource, and we are deeply in debt to those who have taken good care of it.

Scattered over the best of it you will find pentagonal hay barns like those of Finland, groups of Scandinavian stone farmsteads with thatched sheds, Czech communities both Catholic and Protestant, villages of devout Dutch Reformed gardeners, and Germans galore. This is only a sample. The list would resemble the index of an atlas. Each of these communities has been modified by the vigorous civilization about it, yet the essential genius of its source is usually unmistakable. Thus definitely have various groups impressed their character upon our landscape.

I have seen the letters of American soldiers from the Midwest after they became part of the army of occupation across the Rhine. They had entered the land whose immigrants had, more than any other, shaped the rural life of the Upper Mississippi and Great Lakes region. France and Belgium, where they had been stationed earlier, were strange to them, but once across the Rhine these boys wrote, "This seems like home." In spite of an unfamiliar language, they felt at home with cookery, farm layouts, and country ways that were familiar.

After the war I studied in England and traveled on the continent. Rural Bavaria (near Erlangen, for example) created in me, an American of British and French descent, a sense of curious familiarity quite lacking in the actual homelands of my fathers. Moreover in Texas, Iowa, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania, I have more than once experienced the feeling of hav-

ing somehow, suddenly, drifted across an international boundary line and into another culture.

Nominally our nation is white, English-speaking, non-conformist. Yet it does not take much probing to see how thin this statement is when applied to our folkways, whether urban or rural.

We owe the beginnings of our agriculture to the red Indian. The highlands of Mexico and Peru are as important as Mesopotamia and lower China in the history of world agriculture. Maize, wheat, and rice were the three great breadstuffs of the primitive world. Around the growing of each there centered an extensive agriculture of characteristic plants. The Peruvians cultivated some seventy native species, including the potato, a number of root-crops, fruits, and vegetables. They also grew the maize, although it probably originated in Mexico. Before 1492 the growing of maize had spread over North America and into Canada.

In the words of Parker, "the maize plant was the bridge over which English civilization crept, tremblingly and uncertainly at first, then boldly and surely to a foothold and a permanent occupation of America." Maize, cultivated under Indian advice and by Indian methods, provided food for the early whites. Soon, supplemented in the Virginia Colony by tobacco from the Caribbean and potatoes from South America, it began to provide surplus for export and the means of commerce. Later, the potato relieved the acute food scarcity of the Industrial Revolution in Western Europe.

The Spanish padres who came into Mexico and our own Southwest brought with them a culture which in many ways blended harmoniously with that of the Indian. Mediterranean architecture and the agriculture of Spain were congenial to the new climate and people. The Span-

iards brought with them horses and cattle, vegetables and fruits. Peaches, olives, and grapes flourished in the sunny climate of New Spain.

Northeastward, in New England, the British brought with them their small grains, vegetables, and fruits which they added to the Indian crops. The Indians, however, had little chance to benefit from this contribution. The new civilization was hostile to the native half-hunters, half-farmers. They were not encouraged to remain and become part of the community. The English, more than the Spanish or French, brought their own women and seldom intermarried with the natives. Thus there was little influence exerted by Indian mothers on new generations.

Perhaps the most disturbing element brought in from Europe was an alien conception of property, privilege, and financial profit. The Indian was used to working for his group rather than for himself. There is evidence that his demoralization—certainly his brigandage—began with the breakdown of this older pattern. He began to steal and to kill in earnest when he was paid for the booty. So it was chiefly in remote villages and pueblos that he was able to retain, and still retains, his old way of life and his excellent agriculture. In the Southwest the efforts of priests to encourage native industry offset in some degree the ruin wrought by the vast and oppressive hacienda system which saddled Spanish America with feudalism.

North of New York, the Atlantic Coast of the United States was settled largely by British commoners, artisans and the like. In Virginia and southward, there were more of the gentry. The colonies between received a greater share of Europeans from the continent—Germany, Sweden, and Holland. Thus there were impressed upon the infant country three distinctive traditions of rural life which have carried sur-

prisingly to the westward. Even today they are still fusing into the pattern of American agriculture.

It is probably fair to say that the New Englanders were farmers by necessity rather than by choice and genius. To them the farm was something to be endured until they or their sons could be graduated into urban trades or professions. Even those with farm experience in England were faced by new conditions for which they had no precedent. The hills of Connecticut, stripped of their surface soil and covered with second-growth forests through which the painfully built stone fences still run, are mute evidence of long mismanagement. Yet it must be added that in many places, notably in Vermont and New Hampshire, these sons of England at length made their peace with the land and learned to live with it rather than off of it. The New England farm at its best is something to see. Its buildings bear the marks of good material, superb workmanship and design. Its fields are rich and its livestock thrifty. Its owner, usually the operator, is literate and self-respecting. For all of his independence, he knows how to co-operate at the real roots of community life. His town meeting and concept of the town (i.e. township) as a unit are much needed in other parts of the nation.

And, happily, not even the land so sadly misused by earlier generations in New England is beyond hope. Hard-working Italians, Portuguese, and Poles have moved in upon much of it. Where less patient men might fail, they have been content to start in poverty and labor long hours with their hands. As a result, many of these abandoned farms, unless the soil is completely gone, are being brought back to fertility and helping feed the great mill-towns nearby.

The manorial system of the southern Atlantic Coast, inaugurated by British gentlemen, had the misfortune to lend

itself profitably to slave labor—increasingly so after the invention of the cotton gin. But the fastening of this blight upon the southern plantation system was not wholly the fault of southern men. Yankee slave-traders must share the blame. The system also forced men of meager capital who wished to operate their own farms back into the hills and onto inferior land.

Yet this system had one magnificent virtue. Its code required the owner to participate actively and intelligently in the management and operation of his land, and in public affairs. The writings of Washington, Jefferson, Byrd, and many another planter show how seriously this responsibility was taken. Unfortunately the character of the southern landscape is such that it could not stand the continuous production of the clean-tilled crops—corn, tobacco, and cotton—which must be produced and converted into cash under such a system. It began to erode severely, even in Colonial days, save perhaps in a few places where groups of peasants from Europe were able to practice subsistence, rather than cash, farming.

The tradition of owner-operated, meticulously handled small farms was strongest along the middle Atlantic seaboard, between New England and the plantation country. It was continental rather than British, peasant rather than artisan or gentle in origin. It was based upon the feeling that the land was a home rather than a source of cash income to be exploited. The first obligation placed upon it was to furnish as much as possible for the family to use upon the place. Pastures were large and well cared for, woodlots were protected, the farm animals were fed on the place. Thus the field crops which under a cash system would be sold and moved away from the land, with all of the nutrient materials they contained, were conserved. Manure piles were, as on

the continent of Europe, treated with the respect they deserve. In consequence the soil remained fertile and costly fertilizers were not needed. Pastures and woodlands occupied the sloping ground, which was thus protected against the erosion so destructive in New England and the southern states.

Such was the essence of the Pennsylvania Dutch tradition, as it is called. It still persists. In places it has come to include cash crops, notably fine tobacco, yet these are handled in such a way as not to injure the soil. Like the hygienic principles of the Jewish people, this tradition embodies practices which are much older than scientific knowledge but which are, on the whole, scientifically sound. It includes a severe discipline, personal and family, a respect for hard work and economy. Fathers saved their money, not to launch their sons on urban careers or to retire themselves to the city, but to provide each child with a suitable farm.

Often these new farms were to be had from more restless or less thrifty neighbors. This partly explains the old saying: "When the Dutch come in, the Yankees leave." Eventually a neighborhood, under this system, would reach the saturation point and migration toward the West would be necessary. Thus the continental pattern of life on the land and love for it has spread into the interior and is manifest in communities as far west as Nebraska and Kansas.

In its main features this pattern was continued by the Scandinavians whose story, as Carl Wittke puts it, "is largely the story of the conquest of the rolling prairie." Swedes began to come in during the 1840s, as the rich black soil of Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa was being opened up to settlement. After the Civil War they came in increasing numbers, fanning out across the prairies from Kansas to the Dakotas; so did the Norwegians

and Danes. Likewise the Finns, also thrifty continental farmers, came into the northern grassland states and the adjacent timbered country.

Lest you conclude that the tradition of continental Europe in farming was always sufficient to insure success and forestall tragedy, let me counsel you to read Marie Sandoz' *Old Jules* or to read it again if you have laid it aside. There are certain limits in the great play of climatic forces beyond which the old ways will not work. New and unfamiliar methods must be used, and no amount of hard work or thrift can take their place.

And remember, too, that the lure of quick returns in cash for single crops—wheat, cotton, tobacco, or corn—has led immigrants from many lands astray, just as it has beclouded the judgment of the American native-born, by tradition bent to commercial activity. There are Scandinavian and German and Swiss as well as English names in the ledger of failure and defeat.

IV

The various Teutonic peoples (including there the Swiss) and the Finns have the highest proportion of their immigrants in agriculture—roughly about one-third of all who came. By contrast the Balkan, Slavic, Irish, and Italian peoples show the lowest percentage—something like 3 per cent of their number as farm immigrants. It must be said, however, that the Hungarian and Italian farmers are excellent where you find them, and doubtless this is true of other nationalities in this low group. Between the two extremes are to be found the various British peoples, the French, Portuguese, and Austrians, roughly 10 to 12 per cent of whose immigrants are on farms. Mexicans are hard to enumerate, as they have been largely used for migrant and transient labor. Orientals, of course, thrive wherever they

COMMON GROUND

are given foothold and have in them the making of superb farmers and loyal American citizens.

To tell the truth, respect for the land belongs in the American creed. The great Colonials—landlords such as Washington and Jefferson, city men such as Franklin—all understood that soil must be cherished by any nation that hopes to become and remain great. Many of the early Americans did their best to learn and practice scientific agriculture. They tried to be scientific long before science had much help for them. Their efforts in this respect led in the end to a recognition of the dignity and importance of the land.

But, meanwhile, the land was there, to be cared for somehow. While science was unready to supply the answers, humble men in whom was ingrained the centuries of peasant lore from the Old World tilled much of the best of America's soil, han-

dling it with wisdom and devotion and keeping it fertile, while soil that belonged to more enlightened and more celebrated men was washing away.

More than we shall ever know, we must thank these unknown, unlettered farmers for the stability they gave to American agriculture against the shock of speculation and waste. They held rural life together until the day when science could illuminate and improve the old folkways. We have them to thank for keeping in order a relative abundance of good land with which to meet the supreme crisis of today and to sustain ourselves in the future.

Paul B. Sears, professor of botany at Oberlin College, and author of Deserts on the March, This Is Our World, and other volumes, also finds time personally to manage an interesting farm and try to make conservation work.

AMERICAN FARMERS

"Respect for the land belongs in the American creed." . . .

Of many stocks, of many races, of many religions—these are American farmers.

AN ANCIENT DEMOCRACY TO A MODERN

MARY ELLEN CHASE

IN THE winter of the year 431 B.C. Pericles, the head of the Athenian City-State, addressed his people upon how to live their lives in a time of war. Athens, after fifty years of relative peace and security, during which she had become the light of the world of her time, not only in art and literature, but in her form of democratic government, had again been plunged into war, this time with the great, ruthless, military power of Sparta, in a struggle known to us all as the Peloponnesian War. Pericles had done his utmost to keep his country at peace, but his efforts had been in vain. Now, following the first battle of that war, the bodies of the first Athenian boys to fall had been brought home to Athens and, in obedience to the custom of their forefathers, funeral rites were celebrated at public expense. Pericles—the Greek historian Thucydides tells us—was of all the men of Athens “best endowed with wisdom and foremost in public esteem,” and because of his wisdom he had been chosen by the State to give the funeral oration, once the bodies had been buried.

Thucydides has preserved for us in the second book of his history the story of the burial of these young men and, more important, the words of Pericles. Today, 2,400 years later, they are worth thinking about as a message from an ancient democracy to our own, now plunged into a state of war.

It is significant, I think, that Pericles' words have less to do with sadness than with other matters; not so much to do

with the dead as with the living. His purpose is obviously to bring home to his people, first, the values of the form of government under which they are living; and, second, to impress upon them certain ways of conduct and certain ways of thought which are necessary, even inevitable, if their democratic City-State is not to lose her peculiar position among the states and nations of the world, and if they, as individuals, as persons, are not to prove unworthy of her and of themselves.

First of all, Pericles begs the Athenians to remember their ancestors, who with toil and strength have made Athens a democracy in which each man is distinguished—if he is distinguished—not because he belongs to a particular class, but because of his personal merits; in which no man resents or suspects his neighbor; in which each man does as he thinks is right; in which no man is barred or excused because of poverty from service to the State.

Next, Pericles reminds them, it is their obligation in a time of sadness and perplexity, that is, in a time of war, to find delight each day in those things which at once lighten and make secure the human spirit. He mentions the games which have been provided for the people; he speaks of the theatre which they should attend; and in a peculiarly human and simple way he reminds them of their homes, the very houses they have built for themselves, and he encourages them to take pleasure in the actual *things*, the actual possessions

and objects within their homes. He mentions the products of the earth, the pleasure which all men should take in excursions into the country.

He says, too, that courage springs not from the compulsion of laws but from the manner of living one's life. He warns his people they should not borrow trouble by anticipating miseries and tragedies which are not yet at hand, but instead each should so live his life that at the time of test each has resources within himself to meet any disaster.

Last of all, and most important, Pericles gives to the people of Athens two secrets of the way to live one's life in a time of trouble and fear, two secrets of the way to build up inner security in order to be of service to one's country. These are his words, spoken 2,400 years ago:

"For we, the people of Athens, are lovers of beauty, yet without extravagance. We are lovers of wisdom, yet without weakness. Wealth we employ rather as an opportunity for service than as a subject for pride, and with us it is not a shame for a man to acknowledge poverty. And you will find here, united in the same person, a concern for his own life (his manner of living it) and an interest in the life of the world. We must be most daring in action and yet at the same time most given to reflection and thought. It is in nobility of spirit that we must stand secure. In a word then, I say unto you, people of Athens, that our democracy of Athens is the school of Hellas and that, as it seems to me, each individual among us could in his own person, if he would, with the utmost grace and courage, prove himself sufficient and necessary in the most varied forms of activity—wherever he may be. For again I say to you, we are lovers of beauty, yet without extravagance; we are lovers of wisdom, yet without weakness."

II

When Pericles gave to his people of Athens the love of beauty as a way to make one's days secure in the midst of war, when he said to them that they as people were lovers of beauty, he referred, of course, not only to the Greek love of art and literature, but to that peculiar liveliness of apprehension, that ability to heighten consciousness, which is one of their enduring qualities. Those of us who have read the lyrics of Sappho, the epics of Homer, the tragedies of Euripides, remember how the most common objects, the simplest as well as the greatest and most unusual of human experiences, are made to live, not because of themselves, but because the poet is able to see in them their actual significance and possible meaning to those who look upon them or experience them. Not only, in the familiar words of the Anglican Prayer Book, are their outward and visible signs fully apprehended, but through these outward and visible signs their inward and spiritual graces are made evident and manifest. Sappho writes of a purple hyacinth which, she says, the shepherd tramples underfoot upon the mountain, but which yet glows purple on the ground. Homer in the *Odyssey* describes the cows "with their trailing feet and shambling gait," so that to those of us who have read him and who also know cows from intimate experience, he becomes the artist of cows everywhere. In the *Electra* of Euripides the poet describes the simple foods (green salads and cheeses) which the old man from the country brings to Electra's hut, when her brother Orestes has suddenly come, and he describes these in such a way that a spiritual significance is lent to the most common of the means of life.

This love of beautiful things, this quick apprehension of the inner meaning of the simple and even ordinary which Pericles

AN ANCIENT DEMOCRACY TO A MODERN

gave as one of the secrets of gracious living and which the Greeks imply in their art and literature, seems almost too obvious, too familiar, too simple, to mention as one of the ways of preserving and sustaining so tremendous an institution as a democracy. Yet it is the tragedy of the familiar in everyday life that it is seldom completely apprehended or understood. And I am venturing to suggest, as Pericles suggested to the people of Athens so long ago, that it is the quickening of the human imagination, it is a new awareness of days and hours and minutes, it is a new understanding of the familiar, even of the ordinary, that we need in a time like the present.

In the collect for Advent Sunday, again in the familiar Prayer Book of the Anglican Church, we pray that at the last day we may rise to the life immortal. But for the preservation of what is necessary and dear to us, whether as individuals or as a people, the last day will be quite too late to rise to the life immortal. It is the immortal in the mortal life which Pericles calls upon his people to realize and attain, the immortal in art and literature, in nature, and even in our possible feeling toward a seemingly insignificant possession, the very things we have in our homes, the very things we love.

Those of us who are teachers, as I am, have been realizing in these latter days as never before that the end and the goal of teaching, the end and goal of human life, lived seven days a week, is simply this awakening of the human consciousness to the possibilities existing in the familiar gifts of life itself. For in this awakening of consciousness, in this quickened, sharpened sense of the meaning of experience and of objects, in this opening of eyes that have been blind or only half seeing, lies the only education and the only culture.

But the blind cannot lead the blind, else both will fall into the pit. It is our

eyes which must be opened to affect the quality of our days while we wait and watch "in infinite expectation of the dawn."

"For we, the people of Athens, are lovers of beauty, yet without extravagance; we are lovers of wisdom, yet without weakness."

III

Obviously to Pericles the love of beauty and the love of wisdom are interdependent. Through the love of the beautiful one becomes wise; through the love of wisdom one apprehends what is beautiful. Each individual in Athens could in his own person, if he only would, Pericles contends, prove himself sufficient within himself. Each must be not only daring in action but given to reflection and to thought. To preserve the glory of Athens, he must love that wisdom which the very name of his democracy extols.

Those who have read even cursorily among the ancients, in Cicero, in Seneca, in Plato, for example, realize their emphasis upon the discipline of the individual. In this, Pericles is like them. It is through the discipline of the individual mind, he says, that Athens is to realize her democratic ideal.

Perhaps no more unpopular term, not to say practice, has been known during the last twenty years in the American school and the American home than discipline. Our very ways of life and living have tended to increase its unpopularity. Moreover, we have lost faith in it as a salutary and necessary means to a salutary and necessary end, both for ourselves as adults and for those who are presumably under our control. We have lost this faith partly through our own indolence, partly through our half knowledge of certain alleged discoveries of certain of the new psychologists, whom we have interpreted far

too literally. One term in particular has arisen as a rival, if not a distinct contradiction, to discipline. We are told that we are "conditioned" by forces not under our control. We are, we are told, what we must be, and we must be what we are. Because of physical or mental or emotional inheritance, because of circumstances connected with or imposed often unfortunately upon us by our earliest surroundings, we are destined to be, each of us, one sort of person or another. One smiles at the thought of how such doctrine would have been received, shall we say, by the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay, or by the Quakers in Rhode Island and Pennsylvania, or by those who less than one hundred years ago opened up the great western prairies and plains and built their homes, or by those men of various speech who in later days with hands and minds working together framed our roads and our bridges, our railways and our skyscrapers—all those ancestors of ours in whom, as Pericles tells his people, we should take pride.

Our earliest ancestors built this country upon a very different doctrine, namely, that the one duty of each individual was the salvation of his own soul; and if their emphasis upon this belief and practice was for the sake of the next world, nevertheless the practical application of it had to do with this one. And whatever may be said, in the light of greater knowledge than they possessed, about the means which they believed necessary to salvation, nevertheless the strength of their conviction remains. In our world where it is so easy to say what one does not believe and so hard to say what one does, where it is so easy to destroy and so hard to build up, we need the strength of the convictions of our ancestors and the rigor of their belief in discipline—the desire for which, Pericles suggests, is the beginning of wisdom.

Most of us as adults are beyond the

discipline of others. Many of us find ways and means to avoid the discipline of circumstances, even in these days when circumstances hem us in so tragically. The discipline then which leads to wisdom must come from within ourselves.

Those of us who think at all must be rather uncomfortably aware that as a people, as a nation, we do not like to be by ourselves. There are, of course, fortunate individuals who do, but they are, I dare say, the exception. It is surely characteristic of many of us that we are so unused to being alone that we are actually afraid of it. We do not know what to do with solitude. We have for so long eaten and talked, argued and thought, traveled and played in groups, that we are at a loss how to manage our minds or our bodies when we are alone. We have for so long constantly adjusted ourselves to friends, families, business associates, the society of the moment—and in no place under the sun is society so rampant as in America—that we have literally lost ourselves in the process. We have become people, not individuals. What was once individual and distinctive about us as individuals has been diluted until both strength and color have declined. And with this decline has gone much of our personal dignity. We no longer trust our own judgments; we are suspicious of our own impressions; we can no longer capture the essence of experiences because they are forever shared and commented upon by others. We can no longer find the inward and spiritual grace in the outward and visible sign of books, of music, of beautiful objects, of birds and trees and flowers, of snow and rain and mist, because we do not go out and look for them by ourselves. We cannot rise to the life immortal because we move in crowds and companies which are intent only upon the mortal.

There are counsels to be found in solitude, in thinking and in doing things

alone, good tidings, risings to the life immortal, golden branches among the shadows, as Vergil knew so well. The cultivated man or woman is only that one who is capable of receiving beautiful meanings from beautiful things, inner satisfaction from the solitary pursuit and understanding of what is true and fine. This is the discipline that America needs, this is the defense of the individual mind which we must frame for ourselves in these hard days, in order that we may say of ourselves as a people what Pericles said of the Athenians: "For we, the people of America, are lovers of beauty, yet without extravagance; we are lovers of wisdom, yet without weakness."

Let us look for a moment—as a proof of my contention that as a people we are not sufficiently disciplined to understand the riches of solitude—at the attitudes of most of us toward the physical characteristics of our own magnificent country, now suddenly become more dear to us because of dangers from without. Why is it that as Americans we do not have the same love for our own birds and flowers, trees and hills, rivers and valleys which the people of European nations possess, not only as people but as individuals?

We have flowers and trees distinctly and only American—the redwood, the trilliums, the arbutus, the fringed gentian, many forms of laurel. Why is it we do not have the same passionate love of these, the same sense that they are ours, that they are American and symbols of America, that in their outward and visible forms there is the inner meaning of America? To Emerson, Lowell and Whitman, Audubon and Thoreau, America was as full of meaning as she was full of trees and woods and birds, for the simple reason that they had gone out alone to discover that meaning.

In England I have come upon countless solitary men and women walking in

the fields; in Scotland I have seen solitary peasants sitting on the stiles watching the sunset, realizing as they sat there the inner meaning of life in terms of the beauty of their country.

Surely, if we mean by culture the swift or slow perception and understanding of the meanings, latent and different for each individual, in beautiful things, in books and music, art and nature, science and religion, labor and sacrifice, then in order to rear a culture which shall withstand war and confusion, cruelty and injustice, we must as individuals, as potential lovers of beauty and wisdom, discipline ourselves to discover these meanings of America alone.

"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?" asks God of Job in that wonderful 38th chapter, "or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?"

IV

And there is another form of discipline, which we must learn to look upon with deeper respect than some of us do. This is the discipline which is at once the end and the means of hard work. Today, ever increasing thousands of American young men are learning it because they must learn it, for the sake of the preservation of America. It is equally necessary that we learn it too, as a vital and necessary part of civilian defense. For it has surely become characteristic of us as a people during the last twenty years that if we can find an easy job to do, we do it in preference to a hard one; or that if we can discover an easy way to do a hard job, we are eager to embrace it.

There have been during the past years in our magazines articles written by persons of authority who claim that American youth of the last twenty years has had

COMMON GROUND

no moral purpose, no sense of moral or spiritual values. From many years of association with young people, I know this is not true. But I also know that the tendency in American education of the past twenty years both in our schools and in our homes has come perilously near to making it possible. Moral purpose, moral and spiritual fibre, do not arise from and are not cultivated by the study of either easy or theoretical subjects. Rather, as I see it, moral and spiritual values arise from an association with things immeasurably bigger and finer than oneself. The tendency in American education during these last years has been away from the old and tried toward the new and problematical, away from the classics and from mathematics and toward social theories; away from the ancient and beautiful in literature and toward the new and experimental. In other words, away from the hard and toward the easy.

Many of the changes in the studies emphasized in schools and colleges today arise from the problems and demands resulting from a new world of machinery and speed. Many more result from the problems and demands of parents in homes. For many parents, I have discovered from long experience, have tended to become as afraid of their children as they have become indulgent. Doubtless the indulgence arises unconsciously from the fear. Latin, for example, is no longer encouraged by parents. If it were, it would not to so great an extent have passed from our schools and colleges. Children claim that it is too hard, that it takes too much work, and they are passively allowed to discontinue it or never to begin it. Thus they never come into association with many of the thoughts which have made our civilization, with the great poetry of Vergil, the wisdom of Cicero, the precepts of Seneca, nor do they experience for themselves the immeasurable value of the

discipline required in the discovery of these thoughts.

Philosophy, one often hears college students say (and one suspects they too often echo their parents), is for the mystical, not for the practical mind. It leads to nothing, they say, except a lot of notions about the life of the spirit. And yet it is this life of the spirit which in these past months and weeks has suddenly become not only desirable but necessary in the defense of the individual. Thus truth herself, which means only the awakening of the human mind to those immeasurable riches to be found in great and noble souls, and which can be discovered only by the discipline of the human mind, is too often not discovered, and what we mean by moral and spiritual values suffers for want of nourishment.

"Wisdom has her beginning in the desire for discipline," says the old and unknown poet and philosopher of the Books of Wisdom. "For we, the people of Athens," says Pericles, "are lovers of beauty, yet without extravagance; we are lovers of wisdom, yet without weakness."

V

Victor Hugo in one of his essays makes a prophecy which seems tragic and impossible in the light of things which are happening today.

"In the twentieth century," he writes, "war will be dead, the scaffold will be dead, hatred will be dead, frontier boundaries will be dead, dogmas will be dead. But man will live. He will possess something higher than all these because of himself—a great country, which is the whole earth, and a great hope, which is the whole heaven."

Nearly half the twentieth century is gone. We shall have to hasten if his prophecy is to be fulfilled. And not the next person who has more time and more

AN ANCIENT DEMOCRACY TO A MODERN

abilities, not alone the men and boys fighting for freedom, for faith in this democracy, but you and I, in our work and in our hours of leisure. We have the means of beauty and the means of grace within ourselves, the means of apprehending the immortal within the mortal and of rising to it, of discerning the golden branch among the shadows.

For in the last analysis no army of defense will alone save our democracy. Working with it must be another army of defense, manned by men and women, young, middle-aged and old, who through themselves and by themselves have discovered Pericles' secrets of the love of beauty and the love of wisdom.

In these days, when we all long to be of service in the defense of our democracy, we must not lose sight of the fact that the defense of our own minds and our spirits is such a service—a defense through self-reliance, through discipline, through a heightened consciousness of the value of

the familiar, through an understanding of what it means to rise to the life immortal in the familiar round of familiar days, through an active seizing upon what is beautiful and what is fine until that which is beautiful and that which is fine become a part of ourselves. It is this aspect of civilian defense 2,400 years in Greece which Pericles was encouraging upon his people. It is this aspect of the civilian defense of American democracy of which Thoreau in a later day was writing when he said:

“To affect the quality of one's day, that is the highest of the arts.”

“We must awaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids but by an infinite expectation of the dawn.”

This is part of an address delivered by Mary Ellen Chase before the annual conference of the Secondary Education Board in Philadelphia last spring.

ME DO IT!

LETA BROWNE

OLD Pietro Parini finished his wine in silence. He stared at his large family seated around the kitchen table. Maria, his wife, wasn't eating a mouthful. Her soft dark eyes were filled with fear. The radio was blaring the same news it had carried for the past two hours. No matter what the details, it told but one thing to the Parini family: Italy and America were at war.

Suddenly Pietro, his black brows lowered, his mouth firm, pushed back his glass and banged his big fist on the table. The dishes and Maria trembled.

"Lo faró!" he announced, looking at his wife, then at the others. "Me do it!" Maria's eyes widened in alarm.

"Do what, Papa?"

"Be citizen. Go school. Show what country me like."

Tony, the 16-year-old grandson, laughed.

"But Grandpa, you can't read. You could never be a citizen."

"Me go school. Me learn read."

"But that's crazy," insisted Tony. "At your age, how could you learn? You've never been a day to school."

Pietro glared defiantly. "Me learn."

"But what's the use? You'll retire next year. The mill boss told you so. You don't have to be a citizen."

"Silenzio! Me voglio fare cittadino—Me want to be citizen. Show what country me like. Too old-a fight—so show me like America." Tony was silenced.

Pietro rose, his great bulk seeming to fill the room.

"Maria, clean-a shirt. Me take-a tie too."

Maria left the table and moved slowly toward the bedroom. Pietro followed with a firm step. The family remained at the table, eating and arguing.

Soon Pietro returned to the kitchen, his big hands scrubbed, his gray hair parted and combed, his bright tie ready to spring from his clean shirt. He tried to loosen it, twisting his neck and shoulders.

His daughter Laura spoke up. "Don't you want me to go with you, just the first night?"

The old man hesitated. Then he threw back his head. "Perché? Me talk English. Teach show me how read an' write." He turned to his wife. "Come to gate." They left the kitchen together.

At the gate Pietro's eyes softened. "Io ritorno—Me come back," he whispered. Maria's mouth trembled. Abruptly he turned from her and started down the hill. He didn't look back.

At five minutes to seven Pietro stood at the door of the English room. The teacher was writing on the board, her back to him. He shifted his weight and coughed. The teacher turned.

"Come in," she said, smiling.

He approached the desk. His knees were rubber.

"Won't you sit down?" The teacher showed him to a front seat. "I'll be with you in a minute." She turned to finish her writing.

Pietro glanced around the room. It was filling up fast. Some of the men he had seen around town—others were old friends. One of them spoke. "Good old man, Pietro—you come school."

Pietro grinned weakly.

The teacher came to him with a white card. "Do you read and write a little?"

Pietro shook his head. "No, Teach. Me not time-a learn. Too old now?"

"No, I don't think so. Many people learn when they are old."

His eyes came to life. "Then, by God, me do it!"

"Good! I'll fill out your card tonight. What's your name?"

"Pietro Giovanni Parini."

"Your age?"

"Sixty-four. Me stop-a work next year. Work thirty year at mill."

"That's fine. And your address?"

Pietro looked at her. "Me what?" He looked at his clothes.

"I mean where do you live?"

"Oh—oh. In town. Other side of town."

"And what street?"

"Far from school. Up on hill."

"Well, can you bring me the street name tomorrow night?"

He brightened. "Si, si—Laura write, I bring."

"Good. And have you your first papers?"

"Si. Long-a time now. Second papers, no. All-a time afraid no can learn read."

"Well, I think you can learn. You understand English better than most of the people here. You understand everything I say." His face shone. "Shall we start by writing your name?"

Pietro's eyes danced. "Si, si. Me no like-a cross for name."

The teacher wrote a large P in the left-hand corner of a piece of paper.

"This is your first letter. You write this first."

He grasped the pencil vertically in his gnarled fingers. The teacher showed him how to hold it and went on to the next pupil. When she left, he re-arranged it in the first position. He stared at the funny lines. Turning the paper on its side made the mark simpler. So he started to draw the letter P lying on its face. One long mark, one little rope under half of it. Why, that wasn't so hard. Soon the paper was filled with marks and ropes. The teacher came back to him.

"Good, good. You know the first letter of your name. Now for more."

She wrote Pie—and stood waiting for him to start on it. He turned the paper sideways. She turned it back. He looked up resentfully.

"You must do it this way. You no learn if you do it that way."

With a big sigh he went to work. This wasn't so good. Often the i was taller



than the P—and the e was fatter than it was tall. He filled four pages with Pie, and showed them to the teacher.

"Good. The last ones are pretty good. Now let's finish your name." She wrote Pietro across the top of a clean piece of

COMMON GROUND

paper. "Do you think you can learn this tonight?"

He studied the lines, going in every direction. "Me try." Quickly he bent over the desk. By nine he was still trying, his hands moist, his gray hair rumpled. The teacher looked at the last page.

"You're getting it. These last ones are pretty good." Pietro looked up gratefully.

"By God, me lick it," he cried. "Me work home. Laura help."

"Sure you can lick it. Tomorrow night you'll know it. That's all for tonight though."

Pietro rose heavily from his seat, stretching his back and legs. "Thank you, Teach, thank you. Me come tomorrow night."

He joined his friends as they left the room, talked in rapid Italian, and showed them his papers.

After only two weeks of school, there was Christmas vacation. Two weeks of no school! But teacher told him to practice—he could draw both of his names now—and to learn how to say the letters in them. His children could help him. Then after vacation he could learn all the alphabet.

Pietro shook his head. "Me so old, Teach. Head hurt after school."

The teacher put her hand on his shoulder. "Don't work so long at a time. Only one hour at one time. Understand?"

He shook his head doubtfully. "Si—me try. Thank you, Teach. Good-bye." Slowly he left the room, shoulders bent, hands at his sides.

After Christmas vacation, Italians flooded the Americanization classes. Rumors were rampant. Must they move from the West Coast? Must they go to concentration camps? Must they be herded with Japanese? Would they be sent back to Italy? Didn't the government want them to be citizens now?

Then one day the newspapers and radios carried the fateful news. Enemy aliens on the West Coast must move from coastal areas to inland districts. There was no alternative. Homes were to be broken, parents separated from children and forced to move to strange new inland towns.

Defiantly, young Tony came to see the teacher about it. "What have my grandfather and grandmother done? Why do they have to move?"

She explained the government wanted time to investigate each case. Then the enemy aliens might be allowed to return.

"Why don't they investigate before they send them away?" demanded Tony.

This took time, she said; we were at war.

Tony abruptly turned away, muttering something about all countries being alike.

Old Pietro came to school to say good-bye. Could he go to school in the new town? The teacher thought yes. He stood still a moment, thinking.

"Teach," he said finally, "you no listen-a Tony if he talk-a bad. He say government no good-a send us away. That no true. War send us away—not government. This best country in world."

The teacher nodded. "I think so too."

But Pietro hadn't finished. "You say, *think* so—me know! In old country, if rich man walk-a da street, me do this-away!" He bowed from the waist, in a servile manner. "Me no even-a talk rich man if he no talk-a first. But here—me write to President. Here me shake hands with boss. Have good job. This good country. You no listen Tony. He young."

The teacher agreed, shook his hand warmly, and said good-bye.

Laura was waiting to take the old folks to the strange inland town.

Gradually, within a few months, the enemy aliens were investigated and most

were allowed to return home. They held no resentment—only their American-born descendants did that. The children had been forced to cook and wait on themselves for a few months. They blamed the United States government.

Pietro came to school the first night he returned. He walked straight to the teacher's desk and stood there.

She put out her hand. "I'm so glad you're back. How are you?" She smiled.

"Me O.K.—Teach, you time now hear me?" His eyes were eager.

"Yes, lots of time. It's early." She waited.

Clearing his throat, he stood up straight, and began. "A-B-C-D-E—" and so, without a mistake, through the 26 letters of the alphabet.

"Pietro, that's wonderful!"

The man lifted his chin. "Me lick 'em," he smiled. "Want me do again?"

"Oh yes, when everybody gets here." Pietro's face shone.

He had been out of town so long he had only a few weeks of school before the summer vacation. But in that time he learned to read and write the first two lessons. He asked for more to take home for the summer. "My kids they help me. I make 'em." Very carefully he carried five lessons from the school.

In September Pietro was the first pupil to arrive in the English class.

"Teach, me do something this—a summer you no like. Italian radio say do it. All my friends do it."

"What was that?"

"Radio say everybody take-a second papers. Say it show we want-a be citizens. So we take." The teacher looked serious.

"But that means you may be called any day for the examination. You may be asked to read, and to answer questions on the Constitution."

"Me know. Me no read much. Me no study Constitution. Me no can pass. But radio say take-a second papers." He stood humbly before her.

The teacher sighed. So everyone must start to study the Constitution, even those who couldn't read or speak English! She turned to greet others who were coming into the room. Pietro took his seat.

All of the next week Pietro was absent. On Friday afternoon the teacher went to call on him. Maria opened the door, smiling a big welcome when she saw her guest.

"Oh, come in, Teach, come in." They went to the kitchen and sat near the big table. "Pietro no home—pretty soon home."

Tony came rushing in from school.

"Oh, hello," he said, when he saw her. "I guess you came to see why Grandpa isn't going to school now." He smiled confidently.

"Yes. He was doing so well I hated to see him stop. Do you know what's wrong?"

"Sure. I kept telling him there'd be no use. I told him he'd get nothing from all his studying. But he wouldn't listen."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, just like I said. He got the notice to take his witnesses to the county seat. Gosh, was he excited. I told him it didn't mean he was getting his papers. He said it meant something, so he went. Well, the examiner asked the witnesses a lot of questions, then asked if Grandpa was going to school. When Grandpa said he was learning to read, the examiner just told him to keep on studying and let them know when he was ready for the examination. So there you are."

The teacher raised her brows. This was certainly irregular—before the war there had been no questions on the applicant's knowledge when he appeared

COMMON GROUND

with his witnesses. And she hadn't yet been notified whether enemy aliens would get their papers until after the war.

"How did your grandfather take it?"

Tony laughed in derision. "He was bowled over, anyhow at first. He came into the house and wouldn't say a single word to anyone. But something's got into him the last few days. He's been talking to Grandma about both of them going to school. As though she could ever learn English." Tony hesitated, suddenly realizing he was talking to a teacher. Then he demanded, "You don't think they'll get their papers when we're at war with their country, do you, honest?"

She looked straight into his eyes. He moved in his chair. "We don't know yet. Perhaps they won't be examined, until after the war. But why shouldn't they go to school?"

"Well—what good will it do them?"

Just then old Pietro came to the kitchen door from outside. He was stooped and tired. Suddenly he saw the teacher. His black eyes shone.

"Teach! You come my house! Wait, I wash—We have-a good time. Maria—Maria—" Then he saw his wife coming from the cellar with a dusty bottle of wine. "Bene, Maria. Old wine for Teach. Come, me wash up." They hurriedly left the room.

The teacher looked at Tony. He raised his chin.

"Well, I still say, what good will it do them to go to school?"

She groped for the right words. How to push through his hard American crust? "Won't it help them feel more a part of this country? Won't they be doing something to show their love for America?"

"Aw, I don't know. They've gotten

along O.K. here for 30 years without any school."

Pietro and Maria came into the room, smiling broadly. The old man sat at the table while his wife opened the bottle. "Teach, me sorry no come school this week. Me think all-a week. Now me and Maria come school. Come till war over, then be citizen." He watched Maria pour the wine into three glasses.

"Good," she said. "I'm glad. We'll have a good time at school." They took up their glasses. Tony left the room.

"Teach!" Pietro looked a little anxious. "You no listen-a Tony. He young." The teacher nodded. He went on. "Tony no good citizen. He born here, but no good citizen yet. He no understand. He no grow up old country. He learn." He paused, trying to find the right words.

"Me—me and Maria—no born here, but know America good country. Me and Maria good citizen, right now. You think so?" He waited fearfully, eagerly, for her.

"I know," she said.

"Then, by God, me lick it."

Leta Browne will be remembered for a previous account of work in Americanization classes, "You Like? You Have!" in the Spring 1942 number of this magazine.

Pietro and almost 600,000 other Italian American non-citizens were removed from the category of "enemy aliens" on October 19 by order of Attorney General Biddle. Legislation is also under consideration (H.R. 6250) to facilitate naturalization by waiving educational requirements for similar elderly applicants who have lived in the United States continuously since before July 1, 1924.

A LETTER TO GIULIO

A. COEN CAMERINI

FIVE years have passed since I last saw you, Giulio. And for five years a friendship which has dated from our childhood has been interrupted. Our relationship was fostered on the benches of our school, and continued through the decisive years of adolescence. It was compounded of ideas, shared affections, confidences, an intensely lived spiritual life. Now I talk to you from across the ocean which divides America and Italy, from across a barrier of men and armies.

Despite the distance, despite the difference of atmosphere in which you and I live today, I know we still have many things in common, many ideas too deeply rooted in our minds for you not to understand me now.

Strange—every time I think of you, Giulio, I see you again as you were on that afternoon in July when we graduated and went together from the high school to the Villa Borghese in Rome. And I hear you repeat those lines of the *Faida di Comune*—"You who are Kings in Sardinia and citizens in Pisa"—as if their music had recalled a happy time, distant in memory, a period in which it was a noble thing to be a citizen of a town, subject and object of government at one and the same time.

Ours was a strange state of mind. We continued to read avidly everything important that was written and published in Europe; to re-read and to meditate, to discuss and enjoy the works of the great, to create for ourselves a personality of men outside of history so far as his-

tory was concerned with the public life of our own country. We knew no ambition; we were barren of ambition at twenty. And this at a period in which a young man of brains who would have been willing to make political concessions would have found it immensely easy to move upward in the hierarchy of dictatorship. And we were ingenuous. Do you remember when we decided to take part in the *Littoriali della Cultura*, that fascist cultural contest for young people, and we saw the subject of the theme in the history competition? "Comment from an historical, political, and philosophical point of view on the following subject: 'The Duce, piloting a tri-motor plane, has gone to inspect the fortifications of the island of Pantelleria.' " We should have expected it. And yet we lived so far outside of reality that this was our first contact with fascism in action, with the constant, diabolical, incessant effort to mortify the Italian mind, to bend it to the ends and aims of the dictatorship.

But we were to have many more experiences, some more painful from a human point of view: we were to see men older than ourselves, men whom we considered masters, bow in service to the dictatorship, prostitute their brains in malicious attacks against those who had not betrayed their missions. We saw philosophers, historians, men of letters, poets, yield before bribery, fall back before threats, trade their consciences as intellectuals for well-paid posts and commissions.

COMMON GROUND

And we looked on, sometimes horrified, sometimes merely sad, at the attempted destruction of every vital part of the spiritual life of the Italian people.

And hour by hour, day by day, life became more difficult, the atmosphere more rarefied, the possibility of maintaining our dignity, our integrity as intellectuals, more and more problematic. We took refuge in books, because the only reality against which fascism could not prevail seemed that born of the uninterrupted course of the dreams of men, which created worlds and universes where the human soul could take shelter, could feed on the forms of beauty. And we lived bemused in the midst of warrior music, resplendent uniforms, flashy careers. We were completely foreign to the life about us, like the damned soul in Dante who "dreaming, wishes to dream."

Finally, five years ago, I made up my mind, and I left for America. From then on, the day I went far from Italy, I have sent you no word of myself, I have given you no news. But I decided then, Giulio, that there must still be some part of the world in which men like ourselves would have the possibility of life among free men, among citizens, and I chose the United States. I have not regretted it.

Here in America I have found a world externally far different from our own, as different as day is from night. But I have found a country in which each one has the right to think as he wishes, to say what he wishes, and to express himself as he wishes. I have found a country in which there are neither kings nor dictators, in which there are citizens who can start at the bottom and go high in direct proportion to their will, their competitive spirit, their intelligence, and their luck. I have really discovered a new world in which it is a joy to create, one in which thinking is a prerogative of liberty, and acting

a duty which men are trained to accept from their childhood.

In this new world, full of fascination, I have rediscovered myself. I have learned the joy of struggle; I have understood that it is not a crime for a man openly to express his own ideas, but rather a social duty, that to fight against what one considers injustice is a right of free men, and that to give up this right means to give up all independence of spirit and all dignity as a man. In short, I have learned that it is not enough to withdraw from what one does not approve, that it is not sufficient to close oneself within a tower of ivory, but that instead man must act, must take up active opposition to the evil before it is irremediable, must uphold his own convictions by his own acts. I have learned to act as a free man, in the full social meaning of that word.

That is why it was easy for me to become an American. Being an American does not imply only a nationalistic restriction: America is, aside from being a great country, a great nation, a way of being, a way of living. How shall I explain this? It is like the confluence of many currents of thought, of many and different types of minds, of the most varied national and racial elements which are growing to live together in harmony and which bring to the public life of their country the best elements of the centuries-old experience of their nations of origin. America is the land of all ideas. Men have brought here with them the baggage of their hopes, their illusions, their dreams. Therefore it was not difficult for me to become an American. It was not even a question of good will but only a problem of adaptability. The times have accelerated this process of assimilation. The certainty of coming struggle added the element of timeliness to my adaptation. Today, now that the conflict has finally

A LETTER TO GIULIO

broken out, I am decisively on the side of my new country. There were no doubts when I made up my mind. And if I often think of Italy as of the country of my birth, I think of America as the land in which I found the possibility of living as a free man.

Then I remember how much you and I suffered in spirit because of the mortification of personality we endured. And I am certain there are others in Italy—many others—who like us withdrew within themselves and meditated and thought for years and years, limiting the possibilities of success in life, foregoing the happiness which derives from the free expression of one's own mortal dreams in the form of art, in the formulation of thought, in the work of the mind. And I think that all of them, these brothers of yours and mine, are today a great silent army of soldiers of freedom. They form an army of men who have not yet taken the open road of rebellion, who have not yet decided to take the destiny of their belief into their own hands, and to fight at no matter what cost for the liberation of the poor, the humble, the oppressed, from a yoke of tyranny and from the intolerable slavery of dictatorship. But I know this silent army of men awaits the hour and will recognize when the time is ripe.

And therefore it is to you, Giulio, and to those other brothers that this letter is addressed—not to the swollen hierarchs who are now living out their last hours of power, not to the intellectuals who have betrayed their country and who serve the dictatorship in its offices of propaganda and in its ministries, not to the traffickers.

It is addressed to the unknown, to those who keep locked in their hearts the secret of their own unhappiness, to those who are the true and only repositories of the great tradition of Italian thought which is the tradition of liberty.

For they are, like us, fighting on the same side, on the side of America; they are our companions in arms in a war which did not begin on June 10, 1940, but which continues implacable, without interruption or pause, from the time the world first talked of fascism, from the time when in Italy the symbol was raised which was to becloud the calm world of our great ones.

Giulio, a word of hope is perhaps superfluous to these brothers of ours, for we know that tyranny is a passing phenomenon and that liberty is a universal concept. But it is not superfluous for you to know how much we are with you every hour, every day. In that life of the spirit which we have grown used to, thanks to our voluntary renunciation, there are no barriers nor material limitations. The day of victory, the day of liberation, will yet shine before our eyes as it did in the far off days of our university years, and we will be ready to take up once more our road together as free men.

This was a short-wave broadcast to Italy last July by A. Coen Camerini, who came to this country in 1939. A lawyer in Italy, here he has been connected with the Italian section of the International Division of N.B.C. He is now serving in the United States armed forces.

The translation is by Frances Keene.

SECTION BOSS

MARGUERITE DETI LATHROP

MORE than fifty years ago, Giuseppe, or Joe as he was called in America, began his long career on the railroads in the Colorado mountains. They were narrow-gauge railroads, following close on the heels of the pack-mule trains and forming important feeder lines for the railroads east and west of the mountains. On them, and on their being kept open the year round, depended the development of the West. At the age of ten, Joe was water boy to a section crew, already one of that huge army of men, scattered in small groups in the mountains, who fought snowslides in winter, floods in summer, and coped with wrecks in all seasons.

By the time he was eighteen, he was headstrong and short-tempered, and a worry to his mother. He spent a lot of time in the false-fronted saloons, where there were fancy-dressed and frowzy-haired girls. His father said proudly that Joe was hot-blooded like the rest of the men of the family; the only solution was a wife. But there were no marriageable girls in the area, and men who had sisters and daughters in the old country were called in to help in the matchmaking. They discussed the maidenly virtues of the daughter of *Magnafava*, Big Bean, the daughter of *Il Porcone*, The Big Pig, the daughter of *La Grilla*, The Cricket, *la figlia* of this one and that. Joe was not indifferent to all this, but he was arrogant and hard to please. He finally announced he was going to *Italia* himself and pick out a wife, and he wanted "*una bella*."

He found her—the very first Sunday

after his arrival in his native village—in church. Quite sure of himself, he looked over the village maidens, kneeling by their mothers, aunts, or married sisters, and searched out the prettiest one. As his eyes rested on Annina, plump, brown-haired, and amazingly fair-skinned, his eyes openly and boldly caressed her, until she, feeling their pull, looked up. Pleased with what she saw, she blushed and looked down again. Annina's mother, sharp-nosed and shrewd, looked up to see who made her daughter blush at her prayers, and was as pleased as Annina. So that was *l'Americano*—a pretty piece of manhood. Tall, black-mustachioed, and broad-shouldered, and of course loaded with *moneta Americana*.

If Joe had the prettiest girl for a wife, he had also the worst shrew in the village for a mother-in-law. He let her talk him into putting his money into her vineyard and wine shop. At first he found life pleasant enough. He enjoyed the prestige that went with being the owner of a *cantina* and a *vigneta*. He pruned the vines; he pressed golden wine from the pearl white grapes and deep crimson from the velvet purple ones. In the evenings the young people gathered in the *cantina* to dance the *saltarella* and the *mazurka* on the brick floor. They gathered more often to hear the wonderful tales Joe, or Peppe as he was called at home, told of Colorado; tales that set the dark eyes of the young men ablaze with ambition and made the young girls' bosoms heave with excitement. Walking all their lives on narrow

SECTION BOSS

streets, living in close quarters, never leaving the bounds of their own crowded village, it was only through youth's wild desire to dream that they were able to conceive of the great spaces of Colorado. In Colorado, Joe said, a man could run miles without hitting a wall, could stretch his arms without striking someone's face. "You think this flurry of white feathers that the sea breezes devour before they reach the ground, snow! Dio buono, in Colorado it comes down in flakes as big as a man's fist, and in quantity to drown a man!" In Colorado, down in the bowels of the huge mountains were mines with walls of gold so brilliant they blinded one.

But when the novelty of being home began to wear off and the interest in his Colorado tales began to pall, Joe grew restless, depressed and moody. He felt scrapped, like an unused tool. He was tired, too, of living in the crowded quarters with his beaten, hen-pecked father-in-law and the nagging mother-in-law. She carried every penny the business brought her in a leather sack tied at her waist, and doled it out—only so much a week for his tobacco. He knew her meanness was forced on her by the terrible need for frugality. Only thus could one pay the huge taxes and still exist in a respectable manner. Here in Italy the very burden of living hamstrung the future. He yearned for Colorado.

When his daughter Louise was born, he realized that for his child's sake as well as for his own he must get back to America. He declared bluntly to his shocked wife and mother-in-law that he was going. "You ungrateful whelp," ranted his mother-in-law, "is that the way you thank me for giving you a roof over your head, by taking my daughter and granddaughter to a wild untamed land? Why, the very feather bed you sleep on was my grandmother's, the pots and pans you eat out of were my grandmother's—" But Joe was

determined. He talked someone into buying his share of the vineyard and shop, and left for Colorado.

In a short time he sent for Annina and the baby.

Annina knew only bewildered heartache at parting with her mother and friends and setting off into the unknown. At Ellis Island, she cried bitterly when her baby had to be shorn of her lovely, dark curls. But at the sight of the home Joe had prepared for her, she received a blow that surpassed any she had experienced in all her eighteen years. For, after a short stay at his mother's boarding house, Joe brought her home—to two red boxcars.

Joe was jubilant. He was boss of an extra gang. With his crew of men, he was to keep small spurs and branches of the railroad in good condition. The outfit, consisting of a bunk car, a cook car for the men, a flatcar for tools, and two for living quarters for the boss and his family, was set on wheels so that at a minute's notice an engine could pull it to the section or locality where help was most needed.

To Annina, the boxcars that were for many years to be her home looked lost and lonesome in that great expanse of sky, snow, and mountains, so destitute of inhabitants. An aching feeling of desolation came over her.

But with a sense of fatalism, she began keeping house. There were scant furnishings. One car had a huge brass bed, a stand table, a cupboard built against the wall for clothing. She kept most of her dowry in boxes under the bed. In the kitchen car was a built-in cupboard for dishes, a stove, and a table. She grew sweet basil and parsley in tin cans in the window, hung curtains, put out her white bedspread, learned to make rag rugs.

Once, and once only, she suggested they get a piece of land where they could have a house that would not keep running un-

COMMON GROUND

der them, where they could have a cow and a donkey.

"A cow, a donkey? Are you crazy?" bellowed Joe. "What good is a cow or a donkey? How long do you think people could live on land, if it wasn't for the railroad?"

But Annina had no interest in developing the West. She complained of being shut in, locked in by the mountains.

Joe told her not to talk like a nit-wit. She was in the most open country in the world. All she had to do was to follow the track one way and it would lead her to New York, the other to Los Angeles.

For Joe there was a spiritual and physical satisfaction in living and working in the mountains. Everything he did, he did with gusto, whether it was ordering his men, hammering spikes, shoveling snow, or just wiping the sweat from his face. He felt himself no man's inferior. If the president of the railroad had stopped by, Joe would have asked him into his boxcar home and offered him wine. He drank, played cards, and sang with the men in the bunk car. He had no patience with Annina's whinings. He could not understand the loneliness that constantly gnawed at her. He saw only that she gave promise of growing into a shrew like her mother.

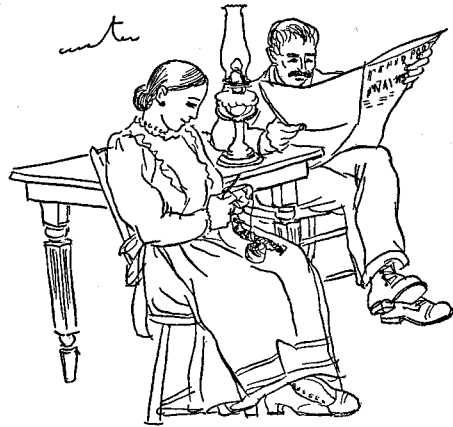
Evenings, he laboriously read the *Denver Post*—to him, the mouthpiece of the nation—and under the yellow circle of the kerosene light Annina crocheted. Always, while her fingers fluttered over the long rows of lace, her lips kept moving, mumbling lamentations, releasing the pressure of her loneliness. "Se Mamma sappesse—" she always began. "If Mother only knew how I am imprisoned by mountains that shut out the very sun!" she started one evening. "How a wild wolf could come down and devour my child—"

It was once too often. Joe opened the

door, picked her up, and tossed her out, like a rubber ball.

But Annina didn't bounce. She settled heavily in a snow bank. After that, she changed—from a whiney child to a determined woman.

Perhaps as she lay in the snow looking at the huge, muffled mountains, the ice-blue sky, she realized that the world stretched far and wide beyond the village



at home. In all the cold unfriendly world about her, her boxcar alone was alive, breathing a soft wisp of smoke, its windows like eyes reflecting warmth and light within. It was her home. It contained all she possessed, her husband and her child. She picked herself up and walked quietly back in.

She was still lonely, but now she forgot herself by taking an interest in her husband's men. She washed for them and ironed and mended. She wrote their letters back home. She explained to *Il Bambino*, the fifteen-year-old baby of the crew, that it was not advisable to send his mother a hat, just because she had never had one and he wanted so much to send her one. Since no other old woman in the village wore one, she would be unable to make comparisons and show it off

SECTION BOSS

as proudly as she could a machine-knit shawl or a pair of stockings.

In summer, Annina boiled her linens over an open fire and baked bread in huge Dutch ovens, over coals. During the long winter, she baked and washed in the kitchen car, wading through deep snow to hang out the clothes. The only time she left her home on wheels was to go to her mother-in-law's boarding house to bear her son Joey.

Sometimes the house on wheels paused for a time on a siding near a section house, and Annina enjoyed the companionship of a woman from her own country. Sometimes it stopped near a lonely station, where the agent's wife taught her to speak English, to make cake, to put up the wild berries the children gathered. But most often, it stood in a canyon, where the only voice she and the children heard all day long was the river, or on a mountain pass where the wind howled dismally. At every new location the children rushed out eagerly to explore, hoping to find a rare berry or an exotic flower that did not grow on the other side of the mountain. They shouted and waved at all the brakemen and engineers; they knew the train crews by name. On hot summer days, they took cool water to the men; they tended the chickens and the goat. The dozen hens had a portable coop, locked every night and placed in the kitchen car. Nanny, from whose milk Annina made cheese, was invited to ride with the family at moving time. "Nanny," they called and she came leaping over the cliffs and with one jump landed on all fours in the kitchen car.

The number in Joe's crew varied from time to time. Most of the men were from Joe's own province in Italy. A few were the youths who had listened so eagerly to his stories, years before. Some had wives in Italy; many were saving to send for the girls to whom they were promised. All

had come with the dream of earning money and going back to live in luxury, but the dream became colorless in the face of the opportunity to make a life in a new and growing world. They were a gay, hardy group, who did not wilt from being transplanted from southern Italy to the high mountains of Colorado. They were out every morning at dawn, when the blurred spruce trees were like crushed velvet. They piled their tools on the push car and jumped on, legs dangling. They returned, noisy and boisterous, at sunset, singing opera, each one joining in instinctively where his voice best suited, Accordion Belly, who never sang the words, now and then letting out a musical roar, rumbling like a bass drum. When they worked close to the boxcars, many walked home, down the center of the track, swaggering to the rollicking, martial air of "*Tutti mattine mi alzo alle nove, colla faccia colore di limone—*"

In summer, the men cooked their meals outside, boiling yards of spaghetti in huge kettles, roasting jack rabbits on spits. They ate and drank prodigiously, sang and laughed. But when the moon rose, they quieted, and in hushed tones began to tell stories, supernatural or miraculous, things that actually took place back home —of a murdered man who came back to haunt his murderer, of a woman who could locate articles because she was in league with the devil. Of course there was always the unbeliever. Tempers flared high; voices were loud and angry at this violation to the memory of the ancestor who first told the tale. But again they grew quiet, and when the glow of the fire died and the moon had cleared the tops of the spruce and begun to climb the purple arch of the sky, one by one they entered the bunk car.

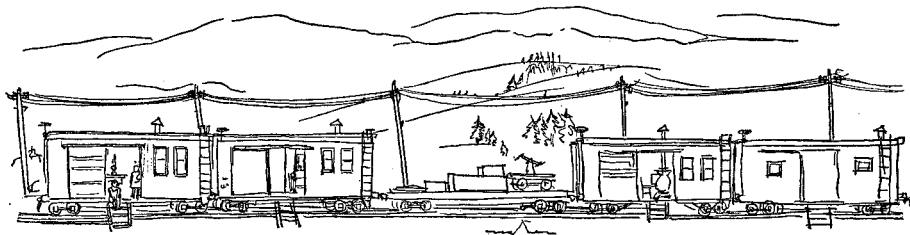
The night came when there were three long, shrill blasts, followed by three short:

COMMON GROUND

the signal of distress that called the boss and men of the extra gang out of their boxcars and sent them running into the clear night air, their lungs pricking with every breath. The children jumped out of bed and groped in the darkness for their clothes, while Annina lighted the lamp and crossed herself. The children watched, fascinated, as the men ran into the darkness, the long shadows of their legs criss-

it with their hands, but all they saw was a whiteness, and a cold moon behind the veil of frost. Suddenly the conductor came in, with two bundled-up children, Louise and Joey, carrying hot coffee in covered lard pails.

Once again, toward morning, the children bucked the cold between their boxcar home and the snowbound train, this time with soup, *la minestra*, which Annina



crossing with the light of the lanterns. Far off, the engine was still shrieking, three longs and three shorts.

The slide was huge. The engine had nosed into it until it was almost covered. Sometimes a slide could be tunneled and so honeycombed that, at the swing of the clear light, the engine could buck through it. There was no bucking this one. It was several hours old, and it had brought with it not only the recent snow but the icy packs of years. The intense cold had solidified it into a mountain of ice. It was the picks for this one. The men bent their backs to the wind. Pick—pick—the flying chips struck them in the face, cutting and burning. The work made the hot blood flow, and the sweat oozed out and froze on their bodies. “Mother of God, what a cold,” they mumbled softly, behind ice-laden mustaches.

Inside the cars, some of the passengers tried to sleep, their legs looped over the arms of the narrow seats. Some, with suitcases on their laps, played cards, but most huddled about the round-bellied, glowing stove. They tried to look out of the windows by breathing on a spot and wiping

had made from canned tomatoes and hundreds of tiny, star macaroni. First they fed the men, sitting on their push car in the fading darkness. Then they visited the passenger coach.

When darkness had softened and melted away and dawn began to climb the mountains, the track was clear. The men, lips cracked and bleeding, cheeks stinging and burnt, leaned on their shovels, while Joe gave the all-clear to the engineer. They waved and shouted good luck to the faces at the windows, and the engine, rumbling between snow banks piled on each side, jolted slowly along, gathered speed, and, whistling gaily, chugged away.

Long ago, Annina had become Joe’s partner, facing tragedies bravely and enduring hardships. Always she feared Joe would be hurled from a high trestle or crushed under moving wheels. Once he was nearly buried by a slide. His extra gang had been moved to a section where, for fifteen miles, every few minutes, a slide ran. Fifty men shoveled and swept to keep this distance clear for the trains. Joe patrolled the bluff to warn the men, so

SECTION BOSS

that, while shoveling one slide, they would not be buried by another racing on its heels. He watched the huge cracks spread on the mountain side and heard the menacing rumble as a section tore itself loose. "Here she comes, boys!" he shouted, and the men jumped clear as the roaring avalanche hurled itself down the mountain.

Sometimes, so great was the velocity, the mass of snow jumped clear of the track and landed in the river hundreds of feet below, leaving on the mountain a red wound, stripped of trees and brush and tons of topsoil. All day Joe watched slides until his eyes were bloodshot. But one day something went wrong. He never knew how he missed the slide that was treacherously upon him, sweeping him in its wake. When he came to his senses, he was tightly wedged up to his waist in the closely packed snow. Fifteen of the men were nowhere in sight. The others immediately began prospecting with long rods to locate the bodies. In five minutes they had found the first, but he was dead—*Il Bambino*, the baby of Joe's gang.

It fell to Annina to write the boy's mother and tell her, as consolingly as possible, that her only means of support, the only hope of her old age, had been drowned by the snow. She found little comfort in remembering how Joe had bragged in Italy of the Colorado snows. "But the mother's darling, he looked just like an angel, all frozen." She made the men recite a rosary for the repose of his soul, and some who had not knelt since they left their native land sobbed like children as they mumbled responses to her prayers.

When the children were ready for high

school, Joe asked to be relieved of his extra gang and given a section house. At last he realized they had to have a home with some degree of permanency if the children were to become educated. And, although he was transferred several times and they moved in and out of weather-beaten, yellow section houses, perched here and there along the tracks in the canyons of the Colorado mountains, they were always close to a high school. The children worked and learned and grew, and saved their money for college.

Now Joe is retired on his railroad pension. For the first time in fifty years, he owns his home. At last Annina lives in a small town, has her house with a "bat room," has running water and electric lights. She has her church and a group of friends. She has her garden, where, with the skirt of her dress pinned up, exposing her flannel petticoat, she fusses over tomatoes and proudly prunes her stand of Concord grapes.

But Joe misses the mountains. He talks of the rivers, the spurs of track, the peaks, the canyons, as though they were old friends. In the spring, he gazes off into the distance where the mountains are a purple blur against the skyline. "Bet old Son-of-a-gun slide is cracking and rumbling today, ready for a run. She's a tricky devil, that one. When you think she'll hold for a week yet, she'll fool you. Down she'll come, like hell bust loose."

With this sketch, Marguerite Deti Lathrop makes her second appearance in COMMON GROUND. "Zia Grazia," in the Summer 1941 issue, also dealt with Italian immigrants.

Bernadine Custer is the illustrator.

A SPECIAL STAKE IN THE WAR

ARNOLD MULDER

BECAUSE of the exigencies of the war, the little city of Holland, Michigan, recently came to the reluctant conclusion that it must discontinue its annual folk celebration known as the Tulip Festival. But in making the announcement, the town's newspaper, *The Evening Sentinel*, achieved an affirmation about the war that crackles with the will to win:

"When the next Tulip Festival is held, it will be in celebration of the restoration of the House of Orange in The Netherlands, the recall of Dutch patriots from exile, the freeing of the Dutch East Indies from Japanese control, the clearing out of every vestige of Nazi influence from Dutch soil, the revival of the reign of law in the land where through the writings of Grotius international law was born. Holland is hereby announcing that the next Tulip Festival will be in celebration of all that. *And the Tulip Festival will be held again!*"

The Hollanders of Michigan, now that the relatives of their ancestors cannot speak for themselves in The Netherlands itself, have thus in a small way placed the emphasis where, in the present stage of the war, it belongs. For them, no mere determination to hang on "for the duration," to bend before the cosmic storm.

The same thing is doubtless true in this fourth year of the war of most of the groups in America that trace their ancestry to other lands. Individuals are in dissent here and there, but peoples have no doubts. The people of the Norwegian settlements of the Dakotas, for instance, may not have occasion to express their feeling

in a community act, but nothing is more certain than that their hearts are steeled for the offensive. Native-born Americans though most of them are, they are thinking of the day when King Haakon will retrace in safety and triumph that tragic road that leads from Oslo to Lillehammer and on northward, over which he once traveled while machine gun bullets spattered down on him from Nazi planes. Norwegian Americans, like Holland Americans, know that nothing short of resurrection for the country of their forebears is thinkable. Their sons will fight and die for America, but also for the land of their ancestors where the Sigrid Undsets of our day have been hounded from their hearths and driven into exile.

In this war the descendants of the newer immigrants have thus a reinforced motivation for their faith in civilization's resurrection and for their determination to implement that faith. They are of course Americans, and they have exactly the same reasons for fighting as those of native stock. But in addition they feel the urgency of men and women who have uncles or cousins actually under the heel of the oppressor. They have a special stake in this war. The fact that they are fighting for America and for Holland or for Norway or for Czechoslovakia or for Yugoslavia or for Greece provides them with an almost personal reason for battle that gives special significance to that term "United Nations."

The unconscious note of confidence expressed in the announcement of the dis-

A SPECIAL STAKE IN THE WAR

continuance of the Tulip Festival in Holland, Michigan, was not mere chauvinistic braggadocio. The editor of the paper printing it is without a drop of so-called immigrant blood in his veins. He was voicing not a personal or a national point of view but the kind of public sentiment newspapermen know through that sixth sense which makes them newspapermen. The people themselves had said nothing about it, they had merely felt it; but the moment it was put into words by one who apprehended it objectively, they knew it said what they had been feeling.

The people of this little Michigan town are not Hollanders, in spite of the name of their city. They are Americans of European stock, like about 50 per cent of all America's nationals. Their town was named in 1847 by authentic Hollanders who came to the forests of Michigan in a mass migration. During the intervening 90 years they have gone through the various Americanization transitions that are too familiar to require exposition here. Until the invasion of Holland in this war, few were specially conscious of the ties of blood that still bound them to a country across the Atlantic; the average citizen knew little about The Netherlands and cared less. Most knew the Queen's name was Wilhelmina, but even so prominent a person as Princess Juliana was hardly more than a shadow to the minds of most of the town's inhabitants. That is, before May 10, 1940. A year after that date, Juliana was invited to be the city's guest and had become the symbol of something that goes deeper than birth certificates or language or acquired American folkways.

A dozen years ago, it is true, the Holland townspeople had instituted their folk festival with the tulip as its trademark, but it was more a community advertising device than an expression of Dutch nationality. They were content when each year during a single week it brought half

a million visitors from a dozen or more states to admire the millions of tulips and to spend money in their hotels and restaurants and stores.

But the festival was not merely commercial, or even largely so; it was rather a streamlined version of a Dutch kermis. It used to go—and will again go—something like this:

Hundreds of thousands of people milling about in a town whose normal population is 15,000 . . . the long main street closed to traffic on the opening day, like a European high-street in carnival time . . . bands from two dozen towns in Michigan and Illinois and Indiana marching endlessly, playing perspiringly for the grand prize . . . the mayor and city councilmen in costumes out of a Rembrandt painting, keeping step to the music . . . a platoon of men in the baggy pants of the famed island of Marken sloshing water on the macadam from buckets constantly replenished from the sidelines . . . followed by a corps of women in voluminous skirts and wearing the Zeeland headdress of white lawn and gold plates, scrubbing the pavement with brooms that kept time to the music . . . all wearing wooden shoes (made by a local manufacturer, who has cashed in on the world's love of pageantry) . . . dances along the pavement (also in wooden shoes) to the music of concealed orchestras . . . floats depicting the history of the community, and processions of children costumed as little Hollanders . . . waitresses in hotels and restaurants garbed in the brilliant colors of Dutch peasants, serving Dutch dishes of huspot and pea soup and *snij-boontjes*.

Such was the Tulip Festival. The symbolism of the Dutch was in it, and their pageantry, and it expressed the sober cleanliness and conservative prosperity of the people who staged it. But its "Dutchness" was far less a matter of nationality and blood than of an American flair for

COMMON GROUND

effective community publicity. The festival was in fact suggested not by a citizen of Dutch descent but by a biology teacher who is a Daughter of the American Revolution, and for some years it was under the personal management of another member of the D.A.R. It was sponsored by a newspaper whose editor is a Son of the Revolution, and many of the hardest workers for its success have been men and women who have no blood connection of any kind with the country the Nazis invaded in May, 1940. The festival was not, and was not meant to be, an expression of the community's apartness from the general American scene. Most of its citizens had little consciousness of old community roots in European soil.

But now, as in many other cities on American soil whose history goes back to European countries, the sense of oneness with ancient cultures has experienced a resurrection. The people of the town of Holland, Michigan, are not less conscious of their Americanism than before 1940, but once more they feel Holland in their blood. It seems safe to say that even those not of that blood feel it through a kind of spiritual contagion.

For it is a strange and heartening fact, too little recognized, that old-stock Americans have also been undergoing a transformation in the fires of the "melting-pot"; in a sense they, too, have become "assimilated." At least in the little town of Holland assimilation has definitely become a two-way process. People of non-Hollander stock have identified themselves, unself-consciously, organically, with the fortunes of The Netherlands. Their Americanism has become richer in content because of this; they have been nurtured by a culture that was already committed to freedom at the time John Milton was championing the liberty of the press. This two-way interaction of native stock and immigrant blood probably

occurs in many other communities where the population has one large immigrant group. I am told, for instance, that the Yankees in some eastern Swedish American cities have become very Swedish. All over the nation old-line Anglo-Saxon Americans are being reborn into citizens of a Nation of Nations, whose roots are not in England alone but in every land, and whose destiny seems to be to keep faith alive in all peoples as they painfully beat their way back to freedom.

Two years ago many of the people of Holland, Michigan, never gave a thought to what might or might not happen to The Netherlands—a country in Europe that had hardly more than geographical and historical interest for them. Today it matters a great deal, in a personal way. They would feel spiritually poorer if that resurrection of the liberty of The Netherlands which they envisaged in their Tulip Festival affirmation should not come true. Most of them—unconsciously in large part—hold this restoration of the light of liberty to Holland as one with their war aims, one of the things they fight for.

When we remember that this face-about has come not only in the little city of Holland, but in many communities in many states in the Union, settled originally by Greeks, by Belgians, by Scandinavians, by Czechs, we begin to feel a new surge of confidence that all will eventually be well with this tragic world. The patriotism of those whose ancestors came from other lands, with individual exceptions of course, burns with a special glow. When Dutch blood and Greek blood and Scandinavian blood and the blood of a dozen other nationalities and races fights for an idea that is positive, not merely defensive, confidence is born that the cause it fights for cannot fail.

Arnold Mulder is professor of English at Kalamazoo College, Michigan.

SHIPMENT

GEORGE MORIMITSU

THE band plays one march after another and the visitors to the reception center crowd on the lawn and on the walk for a last glimpse of their men before they are shipped to another camp.

The recruits are lined up, a double column in khaki, brown barracks bags resting on the street. Each carries a rolled white towel and a canteen cup for use on the train. Their uniforms have the sheen and ill fit that mark the new soldier. They wear their field caps straight across their foreheads instead of at the cocky angle of older men in the service. They have no individuality; each looks exactly like the other.

Yet I see something more. I work in the classification section where recruits are interviewed after they have shed civilian clothes and have been uniformed. Here we see their qualification cards—their life history: date of birth, nationality background or race, schooling, occupation in civilian life, how much they were earning, their I.Q., their hobbies, even their talents for furnishing entertainment. There are lawyers and clerks and laborers and mechanics, teachers and porters and farmers. There are Mexicans and Czechs and Negroes, Germans and Italians and Anglo-Saxons. On one roster of incoming men there may be Riojas, Pearson, Winiecki, Kasperek, McGee, Groshenny, Goldesberry. They are bewildered and backward during the processing stages; they “Sir” the privates and non-coms who tell them what to do. In time they will regain their confidence in the new sur-

roundings and gripe and swear and call the sergeants by last names.

Only today they are new to the Army.

Now they wait on the street, over a hundred men, their brief stay at the reception center ended, their destination a replacement camp in a distant state. They smoke and chat or just hunch over on their barracks bags and wait. Some have already made friends; others are alone and lonely. But each has something in common with the others. They are all leaving their homes, perhaps to return, perhaps never to return.

The band plays a march or rollicks into swing.

Suddenly the sergeant in charge yells, “On your feet!”

The men in khaki come to life. They sling their bags over their shoulders and stand in two columns. The sergeant gives directions, calling off names, telling the men to start at his signal and head for the leading truck of the convoy on the main road.

A young girl has been holding hands with her husband in the ranks. He takes her by the shoulders and kisses her lightly. Then he releases her and she walks back to the lawn and stands there, never taking her eyes off him.

The sergeant blows his whistle. “All right, let’s go!”

The first batch of men, bent under full barracks bags, marches off across the street toward the first truck. They load. The sergeant calls off the next batch and herds them toward the second truck.

COMMON GROUND

Group after group of sweltering recruits, they are marched away and loaded with precision, the cries of the non-coms rising above the music of the band.

Three old women talk excitedly among themselves. One has her eyes fixed on the lines of men still waiting on the street. But one of her friends points toward the head of the convoy where the men are already loaded, and the woman about-faces bewilderedly, and stares toward the trucks. Her friend tugs at her arm and they hurry off across the street with jerky little steps. It occurs to me suddenly how strangely like my mother the woman seemed, her face a mixture of fear and expectation, joyful over the meeting yet with a dulling dread of the parting.

"Hemsley, Cerny, Martinez, Escobedo—" the sergeant cries.

"Here!" "Here!" Barracks bags on shoulders, they scurry for the trucks, some grinning, some expressionless, sweat streaming down their faces and coming out on their shirts in dark spots. The double column gradually diminishes.

A Mexican family stares helplessly toward the trucks. The eyes of the woman and her three girls are filled with tears. Perhaps the son worked as a day laborer so they might have a home and food and clothing. Maybe he played with the little sisters and bought them sweets and toys.

But the country needs him now, and he is going away, far from the home that he has known. He is going like the other

thousands and millions—where, he does not know, to fight in a war his country finds itself in, how and why he does not know. But he is going. He will shoot and kill and scream and perhaps be killed. Though at home he was only a "Greaser," he is now an American soldier like all the "Spiks" and "Dagoes" and "Bohunks" and the men with Anglo-Saxon names. Maybe he doesn't ask questions about the America that calls him a "Greaser." Maybe all he hopes for is that some day he will return and his wages will be good and there will be food and clothing and security for the ones he loves.

The last group is loaded. The convoy begins moving, a truck at a time, till the road to the highway is a stream of rolling trucks. The band stops playing as the last one roars away, and the bandsmen fall out and by ones and twos head for their barracks. Only the visitors and a few loitering soldiers remain on the lawn and on the walk. The Mexican family stares after the vanishing trucks. The father's weathered face is sad and his eyes look far away. . . .

Tomorrow there will be two shipments.

Private George Morimitsu is a Nisei soldier at the Reception Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, concerned with doing his bit "to help along our side—America."

TWO WORLDS

EDWARD URBAN

IN OUR home, in common with most immigrants' homes of twenty years ago, there was little enough money for necessities, let alone books. But there was the Carnegie Branch Library nearby. Most second-generation children of school age hate to have anything to do with their parents' tongue or anything associated with it. Whatever is of "Hunky," "Dutch," or "Polack" derivation is a thing of scorn. Here in the Library were stories of boys who went to Scout meetings and on summer vacations, and instead of Moms and Pops had Mothers and Dads who gave them spending money, were their pals, and spoke "American."

On cold winter evenings when all our household, including boarders, sat in the kitchen warmed by the fire of the cook-stove and played pinochle and checkers, or played polkas on the victrola, I always managed, by right of early entry, to gain possession of the rocking chair nearest the stove. Absorbed by *The Daly Twins at Riverside Prep*, I would sit oblivious of everything that went on around me—including my father's scoldings. I was dimly aware that his irritation with my incessant reading was gradually growing more vehement, but secure in my secret inner knowledge of the proper manner of American living and of his ignorance of it, I paid little heed.

"Have I come to this great, free country," he shouted, "only to raise a son who forever keeps his nose buried in such books? Little do I know of the English language, yet enough do I see of what

goes on to know that these books are bad—bad enough to make you ashamed of your mother and father because they are Polish! Well, let me tell you I am more ashamed of you! Nothing we have is good enough for you; not even do you play with other Polish boys but with those Irish roughnecks from the next parish. And what is your shame doing for you? Only making you more unmannerly and stupid than ever! You neither see nor hear anything that goes on around you; you are even beginning to look stupid. . . . And another thing—why do you always pretend you do not understand when we speak Polish to you before your friends—hah?" But his contempt was too great to wait for any reply. He went on, "Don't let me see you with another one of these books in this house!"

For the next few weeks I read only school books. But the Daly Twins had just entered college, there was a book for their every year there, and I was burning with eagerness to find out their freshman adventures. How to get them into the house? Sienkiewicz! . . . I had often heard my father mention Sienkiewicz as his favorite writer, in tones so reverent I was sure that if I brought in one of his books together with *The Daly Twins Freshman Year*, I would somehow get away with it.

I planned to display *With Fire and Sword* prominently and make a pretense of reading it, waiting only for an opportunity to substitute *The Daly Twins*. But the plan proved unsuccessful. My father, seeing me reading again, immediately

picked up the book to examine it. His expression at first was baleful, but, seeing the author's name, he suddenly broke into a proud and tender smile—the first such he had ever bestowed upon me.

He read the English title aloud, slowly and brokenly. "Why," he exclaimed, "that means *Ogniem i Mieczem!* A great book. No doubt the greatest story ever written. . . . I remember reading it in the old country," he said to the occupants of the room in general. "Immediately I joined the secret riflemen's society. But I did not know it was translated into English!" He said this proudly, happy in the knowledge that Poland and its people were being read about by Americans. "I have an idea," he said quickly. "Let us have a little Sienkiewicz with our pinochle!"

As usual the room was crowded with my father's card-playing cronies and boarders. And it was to these men of the soil of Poland, these veterans of Old-World poverty and persecution—one had escaped from Siberia's prison mines, and another had fought under Pilsudski—that I, an American upstart, began to read aloud Sienkiewicz. For almost a week they interrupted their card-playing to listen. But of their weak command of English I made a shambles and confusion as I mispronounced words neither they nor I had ever seen or heard before. My father, who was the only one of my audience who had read the book, said, "It is strange, but the whole spirit of the book is missing in English. But then, how could anyone express the true spirit of Poland's people except in her native tongue!" Like Peder Victorius' mother, in Rølvaag's novel, who could not conceive of anyone praying to the Lord except in Norwegian, neither could my father conceive of patriotism except that form of it which was exclusively Polish. The Polish immi-

grant has proven he is loyal to America in the highest degree, but patriotism—that emotion which connotes love and devotion to certain ideals—that is reserved for Poland.

By tacit mutual consent the oral readings were dropped. But I had come across a kind of book whose existence I had never suspected. The exaggerated yet realistic emotions of its characters, the combined pictures of romanticism and violence, the bravado, the treachery, the heroism, and vengeance pictured in that book were painted on such broad and sweeping canvases and in such startlingly vivid colors that they left my senses reeling. Not only did the book transform my reading habits, but it changed completely my attitude toward things Polish. For the first time I came to the sudden surprising realization that I too was a Pole. Where only a week before I had been as naturally ashamed of being a "Polack" as the Italian boys in my classroom were ashamed of being "Dagoes," I now became boastingly proud of my Polish descent. When anything about Pulaski and Kosciuszko was mentioned in the classroom by the teacher, I would jump up from my seat in their praise so vigorously as to cause almost comical bewilderment in her face.

As I read further into the Trilogy and other books about Poland, I began to realize what Polish literature and Polish history, with their tragic story of a people's never-ending strife for freedom, have meant to the world. I discovered that many great men of various nations in days past had paid tribute to my father's people. I rejoiced that Poland at last was a free nation, and believed that the majority of educated Americans must feel as I did. I began to romanticise my Polish background and was terribly hurt and insulted by every street-corner remark

TWO WORLDS

derogatory to the Poles I chanced to overhear. Thus at an early age I began to feel the complexities of being an American of recent Old-World descent.

As I grew older and began to enter into the life of the Polish colony in which I lived, I found it increasingly difficult to reconcile that milieu with the life of the average American outside it. There were differences in attitudes toward so many aspects of life and behavior, such as drinking, and, in fact, every form of merry-making; toward religion, which controls the Pole's fatalistic peasant attitude toward life and death, birth and marriage, and practically every part of his life. I became especially aware of the difference between the young people inside the colony and those outside. It may be said of the Polish American youth that "there is no peace within his soul." Belonging wholly neither to the Polish life inside the colony nor to the American one outside it, his mental existence becomes one of vague aspiration toward a definite position in the society around him, and usually results in his forming one of his own—sufficient enough, it is true, for all the outward forms of acknowledgment, but disappointingly aimless in character and purpose.

We may go on to college, for instance—many of us do; we may cut quite a figure in the sports pages as the "Plunging Pole"; we may be invited to a country-club dance or two and think we have really been accepted in "American" circles. But sooner or later something stops us short; we are thrown back again into our Polishness.

I think of Stan, whose father was owner of the Polonia Bottling Works and Beer Distributor, a popular and prominent citizen of our neighborhood. When Stan had passed his bar exams, his parents staged a party for him, inviting not only

his "Polish" friends but his "American" college acquaintances as well. The father of one of these was a partner in a large downtown law office and Stan had a half-promise of an opening in his firm.

The guests arrived in large numbers. Rogalski's "Famous Polish Recording Orchestra," specially engaged for the occasion, began playing polkas and jazz, alternately. Everyone began sampling the food and drinks that loaded down the tables, and there was laughter at the "American" boys' sudden spluttering reaction to the Polish "wodka." Because one half the guests were not acquainted with the other half, the gaiety was split among two groups, one at each end of the room.

At ours we were singing Polish folk songs. When we pursue the affairs of our daily lives, we second-generation Polish Americans are probably as American as the next person. But let us be gathered at an affair like this—with Polish food, Polish music, Polish faces, and some old-timers present who begin to sing—and our Polishness engulfs us and we talk and joke among ourselves in Polish. Here is outlet for the pent-up echoes of our childhood, for the affinities with things Polish we acquired along with our mothers' milk. We cannot altogether lose this common kinship—these reactions, thoughts, and even prejudice which make us brother to every man of our own blood.

Meanwhile, the group at the other end of the room was having a good time too. Football cheers reverberated against the walls, drowning out the orchestra, to which by now nobody was listening anyway. They had taken Stan's father in tow and were jocularly baiting him to hear his strange English. Stan's father, entirely befitting a beer distributor, has an enormous beer-belly, acquired by many years of setting them up in every Polish tavern and club in our community in the pursuit of his business. "It's a wonder how

COMMON GROUND

you stay in business," one fellow was saying to him. "I should say you drink more of your beer than you sell!"

"Ho! No dat much!" he boomed. "But pretty near almost. And I'm got pretty big damn business! Ha, ha, ha!"

Then one youth, obviously too drunk to realize his words, said in a loud voice, "Nobody but a Polack could ever get such a belly—they're all slobs anyway!" Instantly the atmosphere was charged with tension. The musicians stopped playing and stood on their chairs to see. The rest of the noise ceased, and the voice of Stan's father came clearly: "You no like here? You go maybe? We got nice party. If you no like, better you go and no make troubles." Instantly some of the drunk's friends surrounded him and began apologizing for him.

"I'm going, I'm going," he said above their voices. "Wouldn't stay here for a million bucks. Wher'sh my hat and coat?"

And then it happened, so quickly and surprisingly and uncontrollably we were all drawn into it. In putting on his coat, the drunk, intentionally or otherwise, swung his arm around and hit Stan's father on the side of his head. Whether the blow was accidental or not, Stan apparently interpreted it as deserving one in return. He jumped in front of his father and gave the drunk a smart slap on the face. Instantly the insulted one screamed, "Take your greasy hands off me, you dirty Polack!" and, lunging at Stan, he grabbed his coat and both fell to the floor. Several fellows stooped down to separate them and instead came up fighting. I could not see what happened but one must have bumped another. Then, almost as if prearranged, the two groups reassembled and charged at each other. I was swept into it unwillingly, as were probably most of the rest, but it was too late, and for the next few minutes I found myself taking an active part in as beauti-

ful a riot as any I have ever seen in the movies. . . .

Stan did not get his law-office appointment. At the seashore last summer I ran into him as a life-guard. . . .

The pattern of second-generation development—shame, first, then boasting pride after coming in contact with the cultural achievements of his forebears, and finally, on gaining maturity, a bewilderment and frustration caused by the realization of his peculiar hybrid position in the society around him—this must be true, I am sure, of youth of other nationalities as well as of the Polish American. I have noticed in others, as well as in myself, how we seem to live in two opposite worlds at once: one the common American everyday world, and the other our own peculiar atavistic underworld.

It is no doubt this frustrating influence which has held back our participation in American life except as a representative of our colony and our milieu. This dilemma, called by some "assimilation" and by others "adjustment," can only be relieved by our looking into ourselves and getting acquainted with ourselves and our environment individually. As it stands now, our collective actions are developing into merely a consciousness of kind and a jealousy of our distinctiveness.

If we, the second generation of Poles in America, are ever to find ourselves, to contribute equally with others to the growth of America, we must of necessity begin to place less emphasis on ourselves as a distinctive national group and more on the premise that as individual Americans we have something to offer from our personal contacts and our spiritual affiliations with our environment.

Edward Urban is a young Philadelphia writer.

IN THE "MELTING POT"

ELFREDA NORDELL

WHEN we had been in America about two years, Father got a really good job as foreman of the pattern-shop in a stove foundry in a little Connecticut town bordering Long Island Sound. Father had learned his trade back in Sweden and highly skilled workmen were prized at that time in America, as they are today.

Fifty years ago there were only three Swedish families in this tight New England town. The rest of the population had sprung directly from the Mayflower or, at least, followed right on her tail. The Petersons, the Lindströms, and our family were rank outsiders.

Father built a little house with the money he inherited from his mother in Sweden, and the Connecticut Swedish contingent thought it fitted well into the American scene with its Swedish porch and its two white birch trees guarding the picket gate. Yes . . . but . . . Dagmar, my twin sister, and I did wish he had not painted it red.

Among the first purchases were steel engravings of George and Martha Washington and of Abraham Lincoln. They hung companionably in the parlor with an exotic colored picture map of Stockholm. Father also bought a huge volume entitled *History of the United States of America*, for we must become intelligent Americans.

Nearly every Sunday Uncle Svante and Aunt Anna and Aunt Josefina and Cousin Eric arrived from New York for the weekend. The day would be young and Sunday School still far off when Dagmar and

I were awakened by the uproar downstairs. Everybody was talking Swedish, laughing and joking. We couldn't get down fast enough. Papa Peterson and Papa Lindström had dropped in as heads of their families to offer respects to our New York guests. Mother bustled around in her spic-and-span dress and long white starched apron trimmed with handmade lace, the sun streamed through the red and white curtains into a glad world, and the polished copper coffee-pot pattered happily.

Papa Peterson said, "Oop-lah!" and swung us up, one on each of his giant shoulders, and galloped us out into the back yard. There was Father walking up and down between the rows of vegetables, encouraging them to do their utmost.

Papa Peterson called out, "Yaha, Mr. Nordgren, you should have brought along



a *tomte*—gnome—from Sweden to help you!"

Dagmar and I knew all about that *tomte* in Father's father's farmyard. He saw to it that the cows gave the proper amount of milk, that the calves and pigs

COMMON GROUND

came into the world when they were due, that the hens laid the proper amount of eggs. Occasionally some member of the household saw him but all of them felt him around and often heard him talking and singing.

Father had seen a circle trod down in a mossy knoll where the elves had spent the moonlight dancing. Had he seen the elves? Well—no, not exactly. But he knew reliable people who had. Seeing the elves was a very special gift given only to very special people.

But Mother, born and reared in Stockholm where elves and *tomtar* were no more, disapproved of these old tales. No matter how we begged to hear more, she would interrupt. "Nay, nay, Carl. Do stop now. Don't you see how big-eyed they are? What if they should believe such nonsense! This is America, not Södermansland. I verily believe Södermansland is the most superstitious spot in all Sweden."

Father would answer never a word. We studied his face, but could read nothing. Yet there must be something in these old tales. . . .

Ho, ho! Uncle Svante's voice boomed through the house, and in we rushed, Dagmar and I still riding high. There on the stair landing he stood, with Aunt Anna on his arm, beaming. He was making an impressive pause—he knew just how, having been an actor of the King's Theatre in Stockholm. He threw back his head, flashed his eyes, and made a sweeping gesture with his free arm, as he declaimed in ringing Swedish, "Good morning, all you who are handsome."

"Good morning! You mean me, of course," came back in chorus.

We found places around the table for a breakfast of Swedish pancakes baked on a Swedish griddle, Swedish omelette, coffee-breads, and coffee.

Scarcely were we seated than a discussion arose concerning the coming Presidential election. Dagmar and I could understand the welfare of the country depended on voting for the right man. This was a big job demanding wide reading, deep thinking, heated discussions. Father and Uncle were proud to be "Americans by choice." America had faults—grave faults—"just show me the country that hasn't!" Yet America had many good sides—opportunities—swift-moving—free.

On the word "free" Mother chimed in, "That may well be. But too much freedom is not good. Look at American children . . . so wild."

"It is the climate," answered Father. "They yell like Indians. And the sun tans them to the color of Indians. If America were shut off from the rest of the world, the people would become Indians. It is the climate."

Father knew a lot! He and Uncle Svante were eating and talking and rooting for different candidates. Both were right, absolutely right, in their ideas. Papa Peterson and Papa Lindström kept eating and eating and nodding their heads in approval of both sides.

The more coffee and pancakes Father and Uncle Svante downed, the more enthusiastic they grew for their candidates.

Uncle pounded the table with his fist and declaimed, "What the government must do is give business a boost!"

Father pounded the table with his knife. "What the government must do is give the honest workingman a square deal!" He had just joined something called the Knights of Labor, and although he had good wages, he wanted every honest workingman also to have good wages.

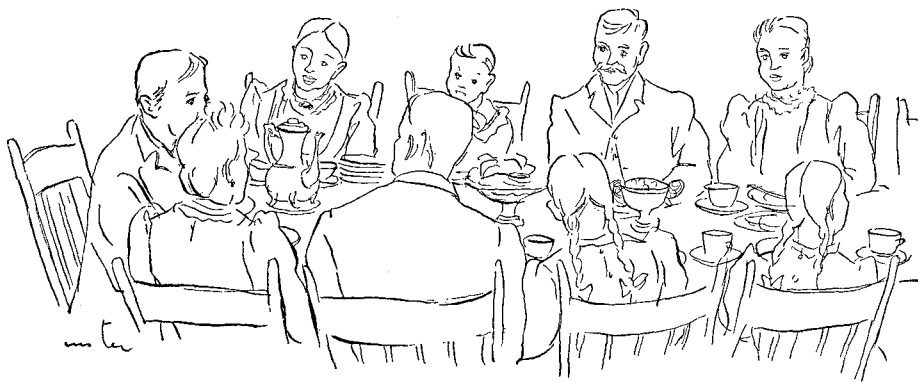
Suddenly the church bells began to ring. Sunday School! Dagmar and I had clean forgotten about it. But there was no escape. We had to become "American."

IN THE "MELTING POT"

On the bed in our room, Mother had carefully spread our new white piqué dresses. She had studied and studied the fashion books to fit us into the American scene, and every stitch had been made by her clever hands. Lying alongside the dresses were a pink sash and a blue sash—pink for Dagmar, blue for me. But the high spot of all the Sunday outfit was a

tracks. Father and Mother had selected it because over the altar were the words "God is Love." Mother said they were comforting and Father said they were sound philosophy.

We walked along the elm-shaded streets, scarcely needing our parasols, except as uplift to the spirit. We crossed the hot center of town and again were under the



pink parasol and a blue! Aunt Josefina had bought them in New York and they were enough to lighten the heart of any nine-year-old girl. Mother helped us braid our long blond hair into two tight braids. Then the stiffly starched dresses were lifted cautiously over our heads, our sashes tied, and we were ready.

The grown-ups were interested to see us start off for the "melting-pot." They shouted plenty of advice.

"Repeat the day's text . . . clear. . . . Speak out."

"Don't forget to stick out your tongues for the 'th'! What an ugly sound! But do it anyway."

"Hold your backs straight! Take care of your clothes."

AND

"Conduct yourselves in a fitting manner!"

Our Sunday School was on the other side of the town, on the right side of the

lovely arches of the trees. We scarcely spoke at all.

Finally we were at the iron entrance gates. Ahead of us a long path wound through green lawns where children and grown-ups stood around in groups, chatting and staring. We kept our solemn faces straight ahead and mounted the broad stone steps. With never a glance at those gathered around the entrance, we stopped at the door to close our parasols with care and precision.

Our first duty contained an element of pleasure. The library. The librarian cast a professional smile our way, yet it failed to thaw our Great Northern Freeze.

"Good morning. Did you enjoy the books?"

"Yes, sir."

"Would you care to have others by Louisa Alcott?"

"Yes, sir." We were conducting ourselves in a fitting manner.

COMMON GROUND

"All right. Here are two I guess you may like, *Little Men* and *Eight Cousins*."

"Thank you, sir."

As we were leaving the library, his aside to an assistant reached us. "Do you suppose they really read them?"

Did we read them! Did we love them!

Now we entered the large cool dimly lighted Sunday School room. We took our compressed selves across the crimson-carpeted expanse and sat down at the end of one of the long benches devoted to Miss Deane's class, hoping she would arrive soon. She was nice; she always spoke to us.

We sat still, our backbones held erect as we were taught at home, our stiffly starched dresses smoothed out carefully, the precious parasols leaned against our skirts. All around us grown-ups and children moved about visiting, talking, smiling. Everybody knew everybody in a world apart from us. We sat unblinking, words and laughter dead.

Across the aisle was Mrs. Hoyt rustling in black silk and gray curls. Last March she had been our teacher. . . . Ah-h—Miss Daisy Prudden was taking her place at the piano. She was wonderful. At the May Festival she had patted our heads and said, "I love to hear you sing. Who taught you?"

And we had answered earnestly, "We can sing because we are not allowed to yell like American children."

She had dark curly hair, beautiful brown eyes, rosy cheeks. I studied all the heads in sight. . . . No, nobody had such light hair as Dagmar's and mine. Hattie Waterbury and Mabel Rolfe had blond hair but not so awfully light as ours, and nobody's hair was braided so tight. And nobody had such sounding names: Dagmar, Efrosina. And all the fathers were doctors or lawyers or business men . . . and our father was a workingman and when he spoke to them his English sounded funny and some chil-

dren tittered. But he was smarter than all of them rolled together!

Some girls sat down at the other end of the bench. They took no notice of us. Stuck-ups. We kept our eyes straight ahead. They were whispering secrets and giggling. In came Clara and Belle Lockwood. They always acted as though they owned the whole Sunday School because their father was the superintendent. Now they stood in front of us and bossed.

"Please move up. We want to sit there."

Dagmar and I never batted an eyelash.

"Move up! Why don't you move up?"

We sat tight.

They tossed their heads and sauntered on, Belle snapping, "They're only dumb Swedes."

We sat stricken. We had to conduct ourselves in a fitting manner, but there was blood in our eye. To be called "dumb" was bad enough—but "Swedes!" And why "Swedes"? The word was *Svenskar*.

Now Miss Deane arrived like a fresh breeze and her "Good morning" included us. Mr. Lockwood strode down the aisle to the superintendent's platform to lead the singing—"Onward Christian Soldiers." Father and Mother admired this song. "Ya-a. There's music and strength in that. We used to sing it in Sweden."

Dagmar and I stood up straight and sang whole-heartedly. We were in our heaven singing. Then followed another favorite: "When He Cometh." We knew all the verses by heart. At every gathering of the Swedish clan, we were asked to sing American songs, and the grown-ups listened to every word and clapped and criticized.

Lesson time. We sat close, but we seemed remote. Emma Crabb sat next to us and froze us solid, for she was a storyteller and full of tricks. At home we were told that lies and trickery were sins. . . .

The lesson was of the question-answer

IN THE "MELTING POT"

type. When our turn came, we answered in the exact words of the Sunday School paper, with no inflection, no unbending, no ghost of a smile.

At last the lesson was over, and Mr. Lockwood tapped with his baton. "Let us all stand while we sing out every word of our closing song, page 79, 'Pull for the Shore.'"

For the first time since entering this "God is Love" temple, Dagmar and I stole

Jack, Harry—these are two little Swedes, friends of mine."

Swedes! But the way she said the word! We managed to articulate a worshipful, "Good morning, Miss Prudden."

Then we proceeded under the parasols. There was the Town Hall, the clock, S. T. Waterbury's store, Miss Knapp's Millinery Shop, the park with the fountain.

We turned into South Street—"Father's Street," because he had pointed out its beauty and because he always walked it to and from the foundry although it was a long roundabout way. Now resentment seethed and boiled in us.

"We'll show them!"

"When we're rich and famous, we won't speak to them!"

Our bodies relaxed and our spirits rose. Here we were on our own street; here was our own house.

Home!

We opened the white picket gate and ran down the side hill into the back yard. Glory, what was going on? The grown-ups were darting in and out of the house, packing baskets and paraphernalia. A picnic! Impossible for Svenskar to stay put on such a day.

"Welcome back!"

"Did you conduct yourselves in a fitting manner?"

"Hurry now and change your clothes."

"We are sailing to Oak Island. . . . Petersons and Lindströms are already there, waiting for us."

Cousin Eric shouted, "Where is my guitar, the love of my soul?"

"Take good note, children," said Aunt Josefina, "how I packed the dishes and tablecloth. Everything must be orderly."

Uncle Svante exploded, "Nej-hej! What's this? Only one pound of coffee!! Sju tusen sju hundra sjuttio-sju dundrande djävular—7,777 thundering devils! What sort of picnic is this without an honest cup of coffee!"



a glance at each other, and a smile flickered over our set faces.

When the song was done, we faced the ordeal of moving through the crowd. Across the crimson carpet, out of the door, down the stone steps. All around, people were visiting, chatting, laughing.

The sun so golden on the lawns came as a glad surprise. And there by the iron gates was Miss Daisy Prudden with two admiring beaux! We paused in our march to open the life-giving parasols and, just at that moment, she smiled and said in her pretty way, "Good morning, Dagmar and Efrosina. How sweet you look. . . .

COMMON GROUND

"Ack, ack, you heavy world that on my youth is pressing, I must away and sit on God's green footstool," sang Tant Anna.

Dagmar and I rushed upstairs and there was Mother laying out our play clothes. We hugged and hugged her and danced about.

Soon we were off cross-lots to an inlet of the Sound. There was Father, his face a broad grin as he held *Freedom* close to the dock. The waves sparkled, the sky was a clean blue, the air was pungent with brine. We sniffed and blew out our chests and said, "Ah-h-h!" Dagmar and I threw pennies on the sails and shouted, "*Blås, vind, blås!*—Blow, wind, blow!"—a little ceremony to coax a favorable one.

It freshened and filled the sails. Across the Sound, Long Island gleamed like a blue ribbon, its sand dunes glittering like jewels.

On and on we flew over the sunlit water. Dagmar and I, squatting on the tiny front deck, laughed back at the leap-

ing waves. *Freedom* was a white bird winging us to Oak Island. Now we spied the fantastic boulders where we would soon be playing with the Lindström children . . . now the sandy cove where Papa Peterson would teach us to swim. All afternoon the air would ring with Swedish and English and a lusty jargon of both. The old life in Sweden would be dwelt upon with love and laughter and tears, and the new life in America be discussed with plans and courage and humor.

We were in the "melting-pot" and, from the force of our desire, would become, in time, Americanized.

Connecticut-born, *Elfreda Nordell* is the daughter of the late Carl Nordell, founder and first editor of *Nordstjernan*, oldest of the Swedish-language newspapers in the East.

Bernadine Custer is the illustrator.

MY NAME WAS VINIA

MARGUERITA RUDOLPH

VINIA was my first, my intimate name. Mother called me by it to bring her water when her hands were sunk in the bread-dough. Father called me by it when he sat down at the table supposedly to help me with my arithmetic but actually to do it for me. My older sister said it with her eyes, as her lashes cast a shadow of reproach when I started singing her alto instead of my soprano in the middle of a song. Vinia—called one of my brothers, challenging me to say “Constantinople” backwards. Vinia—called the youngest brother, showing me the hundredth horse he had drawn and cut out in one day. Vinia—called the baby twins, tugging at me, showing the homemade dolls that had come apart.

“Here, Vinia,” called my good grandmother, giving me a savory cinnamon cookie. “Hm, Vinia,” greeted my bad grandmother, giving me a lusty kiss with her powerful garlic-scented lips. “Ah, Vinial!” greeted my grandfather, hugging me and tickling me with his great gray beard.

And that was the life of Vinia, of me.

Sometimes I was called familiarly Vinka, or affectionately Vinechka. Still, Vinia was my name. No one made fun of it or questioned it; I never speculated on changing my first name. It was legal: my birth certificate bore it—Vinia Gurvich, together with the name of the village, the province, and the region of Ukraine where I was born. And my secondary school certificate, on grayish lined paper, had a stamp with “The Korolenko

Workers School” on it, and legible writing in purple ink: “Vinia Gurvich completed the course in the year 1923.” And my family passport with which I traveled through Russia, Europe, and all the way to Kansas has my name written in all European languages, variously spelled. The English spelled it *Vina*, with a twist over the “n.”

But in Kansas Vinia was buried alive.

I lived in Topeka first with my uncle and aunt. He was earnestly devoted to his business: it seemed to me then that he had married his business, for he gave it his name, always announcing it on the telephone. (He had Americanized it from Gurvich to Hurwitz.) He was quite proud of me: I had education; I’d learn English fast enough, being young. I’d use his Americanized name Hurwitz, that was understood. Yes, I’d soon learn English by working in his store, and he would surely be proud of me later! My aunt, who loved True Story magazine and admired nice clothes, was proud of me too. I had curly hair and a nice complexion. Yes, I would be a nice girl when Americanized.

There was one serious obstacle—the name Vinia. All the fifteen years she had lived in Kansas, she had never heard anything like it.

“Do you think such a name is American?” she asked my uncle.

“Well,” he answered casually, “it might be Americanized.”

“Call her Winnie,” said their young son jeeringly. They might as well have

COMMON GROUND

said: "Shall we step on her or shouldn't we bother?"

The next week, Americanized cousins from Lawrence drove over, and they too conferred about my name. Though almost sixteen, I cried with hidden tears—helpless over the imminent loss of my self. The very ground under my feet felt shaky.

I continued regarding myself as Vinia and signed my name so in letters to my older sister and brothers in Russia. But to my unspeakable dejection I was being called Winnie. The sound of the letter "w" was not only unpleasantly strange but required a distortion of the mouth to pronounce. Then the two short "i's"—oh, I could never say it correctly! I could never tell anyone, upon request, what my name was. Besides, there was something vulgar in the name Winnie, for I found that "wienies" was a word for sausages. I was ashamed of being associated with such a name; and I was struck dumb by its apparent finality.

Finally I summoned all my courage and protested. I hated it. I couldn't bear it. I wouldn't have it!

Thereupon my aunt sought advice from friends and neighbors who were real Americans. They would know what constituted a good American name. If I didn't want Winnie, I didn't have to have it—this was a free country.

"What did her name use to be?" they asked.

My aunt answered apologetically, falteringly: "Well, Vinia, it was in the old country."

"Might call her Minnie," they said, offhand.

Later my aunt announced to my uncle and cousins: "Well, we call her Minnie now."

"Hi, Minnie!" exclaimed the bratty cousin. "Innie, Minnie, miny, mol!" I glowered speechless, sick at hearing the unpleasant short vowels in the name im-

posed upon me. Inevitably it reminded me of a black cow "Meenie" we used to have.

Nothing helped. They were mature settled adults. They had a right to make some decision, to take their wisdom for granted, not to bother with the sensitivity of a little immigrant girl. The Topeka paper ran a story about me, with a photograph showing off my curls. My aunt cut it out, of course. And though unable to read the English story, I read with horror "my" name: Minnie Hurwitz. . . .

After two months in Topeka, my Americanized cousins in Lawrence took me into their household and registered me in the high school. However hard I listened, I could not understand the English conversation between my cousin and the friendly principal and teachers; I felt confused. But the confusion would have been fun had I not had to suffer being introduced at every turn as Minnie. Since everybody in school was so personally concerned about me and wanted to make me comfortable, I felt no need of hiding my trouble. And it kept growing. I saw my name in print several times when curiosity stories about my learning English appeared in the high school weekly. Somehow I could ignore the changed last name, but I could not abide Minnie. So I began protesting. Minnie was not my real name. "No? What a mystery!" My real name was Vinia, I explained. I said "Vinia" very distinctly.

"How do you spell it? How do you spell it?" everybody asked with a puzzled expression. Well, I could write it as in Russian, with four letters, but none of the vowels corresponded to the Roman alphabet. I couldn't spell it in English. Everybody tried to help. I tried spelling it phonetically—Vina—which they pronounced like the Russian word for wine. That wouldn't do. Then came suggestions for Vinnie. I shook my head: much too

sharp with the short "i's." Several insisted on Winnie.

But now I felt hopeful. No one called me Minnie any more; it was either Viinnie, Winnie, or Vina. Yet the confusion arising from such an indefinite name can be easily imagined. Every time I needed to write it, there would be dispute and doubt, another critical audition of my own pronunciation, and helpless resignation to what must have been the easiest—Winnie. I suppose I should have resigned myself and repressed my growing unhappiness.

Then, unexpectedly, I met Professor X. at the University, a Russian.

"My name was Vinia," I told him. "Although it isn't exactly a Russian, Ukrainian, or American name. In fact, my parents got it from the Hebrew Viehne which had belonged to a grandmother of mine—but Vinia was always my name, and I was used to it." I told him how it was invariably and variably mispronounced and how I could not endure either Minnie or Winnie.

"Then why don't you take an entirely different name," the professor suggested, "so everybody could pronounce it correctly? Just choose one!"

"Really? Could I?" Intrigued by the idea of an entirely new name, I was perfectly ready to drop the one to which until that very moment I had clung so tenaciously. "But what should I pick? I'd like a nice long one—like Nadezhda, or Natasha, or Katerina."

"No, no," warned the professor. "Can't

pick a Russian name now, or you'll have trouble again. Let's see," he muttered. "I was just reading Goethe's *Faust*. . . . How do you like Marguerita?"

"Oh, it's beautiful!" I exclaimed, full of romantic feeling about a new name and *Faust*. "A beautiful name—Marguerita! Can I really have it?"

"Of course," he said. "Why not?"

I thanked him a thousand times and flew away feeling indescribably light.

In school next morning I announced that my name henceforth would be Marguerita.

What! Was it Spanish? I didn't know. Was it Italian? I didn't know. Was it Russian? How did I spell it? I didn't know. Here was a colossal problem again. How did I spell it? If only English were phonetic like Russian!

Dictionaries, spellers, and encyclopedias were duly consulted. Finally Miss Harper, my English teacher, spelled it with the "ue" and the "a" at the end, and it was mine.

It seemed strange for a while. Then, when I grew less romantic, I felt it was unnecessarily long and not really becoming. Again I grew nostalgic for Vinia and made a plan to resurrect it. But it did not materialize.

And I am still Marguerita—though my name to begin with was Vinia.

Marguerita Rudolph, author of Nasha, the Little Goose Girl, and a former contributor to our pages, now teaches at Manumit School outside New York City.

SINCERELY YOURS

LETTERS TO LOUIS ADAMIC

SEVERAL years ago I attended your lecture at our high school. Very recently I purchased a copy of your latest book, *What's Your Name?* which I prize. Both in your lecture and book there is much of interest to myself and my family, as I and my husband are foreign-born and he feels we owe it to his welfare in business to keep it a secret.

I venture writing to you of our problem, earnestly hoping that you may reply. It would make this family happy to follow your suggestion for the solving of our problem. Once I thought a visit to a psychologist would help us think things through clearly, but your own experiences and intimate understanding of many such situations will without doubt help us "see straight."

We have been New York City people (Yorkville) and five years ago bought a lovely house, our present home, here in a restricted community in Westchester. We have a son 16 and a daughter 10. My husband is manager of a large chain store. Somehow I do not feel happy here, since my husband insists we do not advertise our background—the background being his mother and brother and sister who are German and either do not speak English at all or very poorly. My parents also speak a terrible English as, until we three children grew up, they lived in sections where the Czechoslovak people located. My folks as well as my brothers and myself were born in a small town in Hungary where the language is the Slavic. We children were all between 4 and 10 years of age

when we came to America and were fortunate in acquiring our education here. We are all living quite well now. My brothers married old-stock American girls.

My parents have owned a farm for the past twenty years in New Jersey. They are old and lonely. We visit them and have taught our children to think highly of them. Yet my husband does not like me to invite them to our home and I think they sense it. I feel if I asked them more sincerely they would love to come. My husband is afraid some one will hear them talk. Likewise he does not have me entertain his own people for the same reason. Yet they have lovely children like ours who as cousins should know each other well.

My neighbors here are friendly. We have a bridge group, but they don't know my story. I really don't feel they are my friends as I can be intimate with them only up to a point, after which there is the barrier.

I feel that our children may develop an inferiority of some sort if we do not overcome this inward discomfort. To a person who does not have such a problem the thing would seem trivial, but to me it is sometimes a nightmare, as sooner or later either my father or mother may pass away leaving one who will need a home. I would be the one to offer it yet my husband won't even speak of it.

Under the circumstances, I thought, even against my husband's wishes, I might consistently urge him to sell the house, get out of this tight community and go

SINCERELY YOURS

back to the city to live. There everyone is free to be what they are without thwarting their lives to do so. However, the living conditions for our children, such as schools and associations, are superior here.

Could you please tell us what you consider the best way out of our difficulty? We would be eternally grateful.

I WROTE you of our colored troops and related problems here on the Coast. Well, we also have Filipino troops.

By way of background I might begin by telling you that when we bought our jerry-built imitation of a Cape Cod cottage, it was in a newly opened tract made from a converted bean ranch. The legal papers involved had some "restrictions" regarding the Caucasian race and also added that Armenians were excluded. We didn't like any of this much, but we really didn't take it very seriously—thought it just a mode of selling lots. Many times we have heard people say it would not stand up in a court of law. But recently, when the wives of the colored troops arrived in town, the superannuated, Administration-hating realtor who originally opened the tract told me anyone renting to colored folk would have a lawsuit brought against him.

Recently this house, which we now rent to Army folk, was left empty and a dental corps captain brought a medical captain to see it. As I saw them coming over the lawn, I realized that a "test case" was in the making. The doctor is of Filipino extraction. His wife and children want to join him, and while our modest but rambling establishment did not seem quite like the home he'd left behind him, he considered taking it because we will take children. The *uso*, which was apparently helping him to find quarters, called me that evening and said the doctor would be out the next day: to hold the

house; that the Army was going to crack down on anyone refusing to rent to Filipinos.

Well, I was very glad personally to rent to this particular family—but I remembered the realtor, the lawsuit threat, etc., and reported that angle. Here I was—between the devil and the deep sea. The Army, according to the *uso*, insisted we rent to these troops; tract law and California law forbade it. Of course it is outrageous—the tract law should be superseded by military regulations. The Filipino troops should be extended every courtesy. General MacArthur would be honored thereby, and recognition given the fact that had the Filipinos not fought with the Americans at Bataan we *right here* might now have been blown to Kingdom Come. I am acutely aware of this and I can not see why others are not!

But I am really not physically or financially able to be made a "test case" of. If the Army had taken a stand, I would have felt it a duty to hold the house open for the doctor. But there was no real assurance it would—or that the real estate man would not sue me. And another tenant came along before the doctor made a decision. This solved my personal problem, of course, but leaves all the other angles quite as they were.

The doctor came to see me again about the house and did not *believe* me, I'm sure—that the house was already rented. He seemed most bitter, and I was terribly distressed—felt I had been put in a false position. I practically forced him to shake hands with me before he drove away. He had left his "\$30,000 home," he said, to serve with his people. The *uso* found him, finally, a nice home which was more suitable for his tastes than ours, so it worked out all right. But I deeply regretted he had this uncomfortable experience. The young dental officer who came with him was full of goodwill but not much finesse or tact

COMMON GROUND

—kept saying, “He’s a nice man—really he is” or words similar, till I squirmed. It is all most distressing.

I’M a girl of 21, with a high school education completed and a very little college. My parents are both Greeks. They came to America when they were about my age or perhaps a few years older.

At present I am employed as demonstrator for a large firm and average about \$40 to \$45 every week.

Now my problem is this.

My parents lack understanding. They put their foot down on practically everything a normal girl my age would desire to do. For instance:

1. I cannot go out with any boys—Greeks or otherwise.
2. I cannot accept boy friend callers—Greeks or otherwise.
3. I cannot have girl friends of non-Greek parentage.
4. I cannot go anywhere in the evening unless accompanied by Mother or Dad—no one else.
5. I must give account of everything I spend.
6. They don’t rightly approve of my job—but they like the money I earn, as I help support the family. (I have a brother, now in the Army.)
7. They even insist I follow the Greek Orthodox religion but have failed to sell me on it. My heart isn’t in it.

The last three don’t “cramp my style” too much; but the first four cause me great inconvenience. Many times I’m compelled to go out and lecture for different associations. I love people and parties, etc., and not being able to be with boys and girls my age makes me ill! Frankly, I have nothing to look forward to. I was offered a promotion by my firm—a traveling job—but my parents would not hear of it.

Thank goodness, I have a very dear friend living a few houses away from me, who is also Greek. She and I get together and sob on each other’s shoulders.

You are probably wondering what I do in my spare time. Well, here it is: a group of Greek girls meet for knitting once every two weeks (O.K. with Mom and Pop); a symphony, once a month; a movie once a week (if I go early!), generally with Mom.

Now, please don’t misunderstand. My parents are very up-to-date as far as dressing, radios, etc. are concerned. The only reason they (and the other Greeks) don’t allow me to be human is because they don’t want their friends to talk about me. Some day they expect to find a nice Greek fellow to whom I will become engaged, and then, if I don’t like him, I can break the engagement and wait for another match. They would force me into no marriage, but still it would have to be someone they pick!

To top it all off, I’m always suspected of having been out with someone on the sly. But honestly, I never do things like that. If I can’t do things openly, I don’t do them at all. So this constant suspicion literally kills any spark of respect that I may have—knowing that I am innocent of their accusations.

Why don’t I leave? I’m the only one at home: my brother is in the Army, and Dad is not too well. Even though he gets around, I wouldn’t feel right leaving the two alone. Another thing—they have no relatives in America at all, no one to turn to. And lastly, I can see their point. They honestly feel they are doing the best for me, when they are so wrong. Yet you can never condemn a parent who feels just that way, can you?

What should I do?

All names in these letters, as well as other identifying material, have been disguised.

• News Notes •

FOR FORTY YEARS, since the great fortune of Alfred Nobel was willed to the betterment of mankind, December 10th has been the day for presenting the Nobel Awards in recognition of scientific and creative achievement regardless of nationality. There are no Awards this year because of the war, but the ideals they have symbolized, which are now at stake in the world, will be honored at a Nobel Anniversary Dinner given at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City by the Common Council for American Unity.

The theme of the Dinner will be "The World We Fight For and American Unity." The 28 Nobel Award winners now living in this country have been invited to attend as guests of honor. They include Pearl S. Buck, Sinclair Lewis, Maurice Maeterlinck, Thomas Mann, Eugene O'Neill, and Sigrid Undset, Award winners in literature; Peter J. W. Debye, Irving Langmuir, and Harold C. Urey, in chemistry; Carl D. Anderson, Arthur H. Compton, Clinton J. Davisson, Albert Einstein, Enrico Fermi, James Franck, Victor F. Hess, Ernest O. Lawrence, and Robert A. Millikan, in physics; Karl Landsteiner, Otto Loewi, Otto Meyerhof, George R. Minot, Thomas H. Morgan, William P. Murphy, and George H. Whipple, in physiology and medicine; and Norman Angell, Nicholas Murray Butler, and Charles G. Dawes, Peace Award winners.

Members and friends of the Council living in New York or vicinity are especially invited to attend and may write directly to the Council for reservations.

PERMANENT QUARTERS FOR The American Common, announced in the Autumn 1942 issue of COMMON GROUND, have been secured at 40 East 40th Street, New York City. Activities will begin about De-

cember 1, and an inaugural reception will be held about that time. The meeting room of the Common will accommodate 250 persons, according to Mrs. Hjordis Swenson, secretary. A series of nationality nights, musical recitals, informal receptions, and round table discussions are among the programs being planned.

THE 18TH ANNUAL CELEBRATION of Negro History Week will come February 7-14 and will stress what the Negro has done in the advancement of democracy. Posters and other aids to those wishing to participate in the celebration may be obtained from the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1538 Ninth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

THE COUNCIL AGAINST INTOLERANCE IN AMERICA, 17 East 42nd Street, New York City, has launched a new monthly manual of education, called "American Unity," to take the place of their widely-used earlier publication, "An American Answer to Intolerance." The new manual contains lesson plans, assembly programs, and discussions of vital problems—as specific suggestions to teachers for overcoming undemocratic attitudes frequently found among students. The first issue, out October 1, featured articles by Mrs. Roosevelt, Dr. Malcolm McLean, and Dr. John Studebaker. The manual will be sent free to teachers eager to attack the problem of intolerance in the classroom.

Annette Smith Lawrence and James Waterman Wise are the editors.

STRAWS IN THE WIND: The Pittsburgh Courier, influential Negro weekly, has added to its columnists Kumar Goshal, who writes "As an Indian Sees It," and Liu Liang-Mo, whose column is called "China Speaks."

COMMON GROUND

AN ITEM IN THE NEWS SHEET of the University YMCA at Berkeley, California, underlines an issue of importance in many sections of the country. Under the heading of "Race Discrimination and the War," Harry Kingman writes:

"(1) The United States must not lose China as an ally. (2) Nor can the nation be effective in its war efforts without fully utilizing American Negroes in industry and the armed services. (3) It seems of paramount importance that we do not permit Japan to succeed in the propaganda campaign she is waging day and night to unite all colored races, with their great preponderance in manpower, against the white man.

"Extraordinarily enough, despite the all-out significance of these facts, the effort to 'covenant' residential areas against occupancy by Chinese, Negroes, and other non-Caucasians is still being instigated. A gathering was held in a school building in Berkeley this week to consummate plans to bar non-whites from a 30-block area in southwest Berkeley. Most of the more desirable residential sections of the city have already been segregated for white use.

"Near the conclusion of the meeting, I took occasion to remind the 'covenanters' that the war has created certain new problems. The pronouncements of Hitler on one side and Roosevelt on the other have made the fair treatment of colored races a major issue in the war. Individuals or groups stirring up racial antagonisms in the United States now, without meaning to, serve Hitler in his determination to create disunity here, and may possibly run afoul of an American government which, by executive order 8802 and by other actions, is on record as opposed to racial discrimination.

"The audience listened intently to these remarks but the leaders insisted, at their conclusion, that the 'covenant' must

be pushed through. Otherwise property values might drop.

"Could it be possible that if we lose our colored allies here and in the Orient and, thereby, the war itself, property values might, also, display some slight adverse tendencies?

"Of course all of us desire reasonably well-behaved neighbors. But that's a cultural, not a racial, consideration."

A STUDY OF THE ECONOMIC, political, and sociological aspects of the Japanese evacuation will be made by the University of California under funds contributed by the Columbia, Giannini, and Rockefeller Foundations.

"The objective of this three year study," said President Sproul, "will be to provide a factual basis for permanent settlement of the Japanese American minority problem in this country, which war has aggravated, and at the same time to lay a foundation for possible settlement of equivalent problems in Europe which peace will leave unsettled. It is pointed out that this forced migration of a minority group presents an opportunity for a case study which will be invaluable in meeting the larger problems of minority migration in Europe, and should be made now while this is possible."

MARY OYAMA'S "THIS ISN'T JAPAN," in the Autumn 1942 issue of C.G. struck a responsive chord with many readers. We quote two letters:

My dear Mrs. Oyama:

I am a reader of COMMON GROUND. Among my books is a beautifully illustrated volume called "The Colour-Prints of Hiroshige" by Edward F. Strange; I prize it very highly. After reading your article in the Autumn number of C.G., I thought about it a lot and finally came to the conclusion that it might be of some

NEWS NOTES

help to your people to have a reminder that there is much in their heritage of which they can always be proud. I do not think they should be allowed to be ashamed of being of Japanese ancestry. Nations, like people, are a mingling of good and bad and are never all one or the other. We all need to be proud of the good while deprecating the bad, and I feel an urgent need to express my faith in the predominating good of your group. If you agree with me that the book would be of use there, will you please send me your full, correct address? Please believe that this offered gift will carry with it a sincere desire to be helpful.

*Alma Broomhead
West Barrington, Rhode Island*

Gentlemen:

At a luncheon recently, one of my guests, a woman abounding in kindness in personal relationships, said she "just boiled" when she thought of the beautiful places we had provided for the "Japs" when they were treating Americans in Japan so brutally.

I said, "I will have to read you something." I picked up the last number of *COMMON GROUND* and read "This Isn't Japan." As I read, I felt the interest and growing attention of my friends, and when I had finished, our conversation was spontaneous. We mentioned the patience of the Japanese Americans in accepting the decision of our government, the possible deadening of the public conscience to the democratic rights of minorities once such action has been taken, and the need for rehabilitating many of these people in other parts of our country.

*Marjorie J. Spencer
Columbus, Ohio*

ENCOURAGING NEWS OF THE GOODWILL of neighboring communities for the Japanese American evacuees comes from the

Heart Mountain Relocation Center in Wyoming. Three young Nisei writers will have columns in newspapers of the region. Bill Hosokawa, editor of the Heart Mountain Sentinel, the Center newspaper, will write for the Cody Enterprise at Cody; Louise Suski, for the Billings, Montana, paper; and Mary Oyama for the Powell Tribune, Powell, Wyoming.

COMMON GROUND READERS who have long wanted to demonstrate their interest in the Japanese American evacuees in relocation centers are now offered a good opportunity. Various interested organizations—the Home Missions Council, the Federal Council of Churches, the American Friends Service Committee, the Girl Reserves, the JACL, etc.—are planning community Christmas parties for the children in all the centers, who might otherwise experience a thin and dreary holiday in a strange environment. The cost of each gift should not run much more than 25 cents to insure some uniformity of value. 35,000 children under 15 are involved in the plan. Readers are asked to send gifts directly to the Project Director, Community Christmas Party Committee, Central Utah Relocation Center, Topaz, Utah. They may be sent loose by parcel post to be wrapped there.

THE PEOPLE OF THE U.S.A., *Their Place in the School Curriculum*, by Lucy Sprague Mitchell and Johanna Boetz, a booklet published by the Progressive Education Association, 221 West 57th Street, New York City, \$1.00, brings together in a section called "Knowing People Through Cultural Differences and Ties," excellent bibliographical material on the European backgrounds of American immigrant groups, their literature, music, and dance, and the regions of the country where they have settled in greatest numbers.

• Schools and Teachers •

LANGUAGE TEACHING AND THE HIGH SCHOOLS

M. MARGARET ANDERSON

IN THE current feverish attempt to gear the high schools into the war program, one blind spot becomes more and more apparent. Enrollments increase in mathematics, physics, and chemistry; more shop teachers are hired for new courses in aero-dynamics and plastics and the building of model planes; the work in physical education grows tougher; and the school system rubs its hands proudly over this demonstrable participation in the war effort. Yet, at the same time, language enrollment is allowed to shrink—even encouraged to shrink. Since the invasion of Poland and the evacuation at Dunkerque, dwindling classes have forced teachers of German and French, who could not shift into overnight competence in Spanish, into taking on classes in English, commercial law, commercial arithmetic, and the like, for which in many cases they may be dubiously equipped. Teachers of foreign languages in New York City have even been advised recently to take up the study of mathematics, shop work, physics, or chemistry, so they will be able to teach these subjects in that very near future when languages are to disappear as a “frill” in war time schools.

This, I submit, is astonishing blindness in a global war; it is isolationism in a world where isolationism is buried with every American soldier who lies in Bataan, North Africa, the Aleutians, Germany, China, Italy, the Near East, and Guadalcanal. We are fighting not an “American” war; we are fighting a “world” war—a war

for ultimate partnership and understanding among peoples whatever their geography or creed or color, whatever their present status in the scale of self-government, whatever their tongue. But understanding and partnership are two-way processes, and in them language is an indispensable tool. We cannot really sit back smugly within a narrow English-language horizon and expect the other peoples of the world to fit themselves into it. Our recent awakening to this fact in connection with Mexico and South and Central America is a case in point. The impetus toward the study of Spanish that has resulted indicates the direction we must travel on an ever broader radius.

Yet while reports from the high schools stress this curtailment of language enrollments, those from the colleges show intense and exciting awareness of the importance of language as an immediate tool in the war, and in the peace that will follow. In the introduction to the Intensive Language Program devised by the American Council of Learned Societies, J. M. Cowan, the director, writes: “Totalitarian war on a world-wide scope is a new experience. No government, Axis or Allied, was prepared for it, though probably none so badly as was the United States. War in which prisoners would have to be interrogated in Japanese, communications carried on in Chinese, propaganda spread in Hindustani, scouts interviewed in Arabic, correspondence censored in Malay, broadcasts monitored in Siamese, and military and naval operations conducted

LANGUAGE TEACHING AND THE HIGH SCHOOLS

in Swahili, Russian, Turkish, Pidgin English, and a dozen other languages never taught in any American school or college was a phenomenon which our responsible leaders could hardly have been expected to foresee clearly enough to be ready for it.

"The Intensive Language Program of the American Council of Learned Societies is a belated attempt to make up some of the deficiencies of our preparation. Under it, universities and colleges throughout the country, particularly those with special facilities in collections and personnel for language training, have been encouraged to offer intensive full-time courses in a considerable number of languages unusual in the American educational pattern, with a view to preparing as many people as possible in those languages for which it is likely that the armed forces and governmental and civil agencies will have call."

At Columbia University a War Linguistics Class began in September, designed to give students a practical knowledge of the most important languages of Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and the islands of the South Pacific. Planned particularly to meet the needs of future officers and government workers in fields calling for a general acquaintance with foreign tongues, it will train the student to identify practically any language he sees or hears. Believed to be the first of its kind in the United States, it will include elementary instruction in German, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Italian, Russian, and Japanese, in addition to a rudimentary vocabulary of 30 or 40 war zone languages. It runs for six months and is open to high school and college students with average language training.

Since one of the most serious war shortages lies in the small number of people in the United States who knew Japanese at the outbreak of hostilities (the estimate

has ranged as low as 3 and as high as 100), it is now being taught intensively at Columbia, New York University, Brown, California, Harvard, Michigan, Washington, and Yale. A partial list of the more unusual languages also being taught in various institutions around the country include the Arabic dialects of Palestine, Lebanon, and Egypt, at Minnesota; Hausa, the most important language of West Africa, at the University of Pennsylvania; Swahili, the East African language, at Pennsylvania and Temple; Russian at Chicago, Smith, Columbia, Cornell, Oregon State, Harvard, Princeton, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio State, and Yale; Thai at Michigan; Hungarian, Mandarin and Canton Chinese at Harvard; Malay at Yale; Turkish at Indiana. To meet the needs of students preparing for post-war service, Columbia gives, in addition to languages already referred to, Albanian, Finnish, Rumanian, Italian, Modern Greek, and Polish. The University of California offers 5 courses in Chinese, 7 in Russian, 2 in Serbo-Croatian, 2 in Portuguese, 2 in Bohemian, and other classes in Japanese, Panjabi, Mongolian, Hebrew, Arabic, Syric, Assyrian, Egyptian, and Coptic.

The government is busy with courses of its own, some—emphasizing Spanish, and Russian, and German—given through the WPA in various Army posts; some given by the War and Navy Departments. American troops stationed in Britain are being given instruction in French, German, and Italian.

This program, while urgent and spectacular, is essentially directed toward specific, immediate war ends. There is another program which should parallel it, equally urgent, one in which the high schools can play an important part. This is language training for use in post-war reconstruction, particularly in Europe. For

COMMON GROUND

this there is probably more time to prepare (but not too much); and the youngsters now in their junior and senior years in high school may easily be some of the people involved.

The United States will without question bear the heaviest burden in staffing the work of reconstruction. After another winter of death by battle, of wholesale liquidation of peoples, of slow starvation and disintegration under despair, some estimates have it that three-fifths of the population of Europe will have vanished. Everywhere in the Axis-occupied countries occurs a systematic extermination of leadership—in education, religion, government, economy. It will be up to the United States to supply temporary leadership in many fields. Great numbers of civilian administrators will have to accompany our distribution of food abroad, will have to work with industry as it re-establishes itself. (See Louis Adamic's proposal for an American Reconstruction Mission, in *This Week Magazine* for November 8, a Sunday supplement to many newspapers.)

If this civilian mission of goodwill is to succeed, if there is to be interaction that will result in lasting understanding and friendship between people, it must operate in the languages of the countries involved. Anything less sets its own limits on what we would label goodwill; anything less is indicative of a sense of English-language superiority we cannot afford to have intrude upon a world we are tenuously rebuilding.

Here the high schools, many of them in communities predominantly of one immigrant strain, can assume leadership. They should continue with French and German and Spanish—yes, and increase the enrollments. But they should go far beyond this. In any town with many residents of Polish descent, Polish should come naturally into the curricular picture;

with large populations of Slovenian, Norwegian, Italian, or Czech extraction, these languages should be made regular courses of study. This has been done sporadically in the past, in communities here and there, as a result of various pressures on Boards of Education, but never on a large scale and never with the sense of purpose and mission that might animate such a program now. As David Dempsey pointed out in his article "The American Experience and European Reconstruction" in the Autumn 1942 issue of this magazine, the young men and women of our immigrant groups, because of "their residual attunement with an old-country culture," are the logical ambassadors of American democracy and goodwill in the post-war world. Their specific language training needs to be emphasized now. High school is not too early.

Beyond this building up of a needed reserve of language competence for war and post-war use abroad, there are other good arguments for the elevation of American immigrant languages to curricular status. They can serve an important function in resolving tensions within the United States now.

To begin with, the student often comes to the study of his ancestral tongue with some pre-knowledge, often only oral or dialectic, but with at least some familiarity with its ways of thought, structure, and nuances, on which it is only common sense to build. Yet often in the past he has been ashamed of his bi-lingual background. "Americanization" has been very prodigal with its language resources in this respect; it has tried to make him into an English mono-lingual (and succeeded all too well), allowing him generally only a few safe excursions into genteel French and German.

This sense of shame often went deep in him as a person, brought about a cul-

tural situation that was the source of intense personal and family conflict and dissension. In my own case, as a child of three I spoke only Swedish; but at six, after one year of kindergarten pressures, I refused a standing offer of a dollar all one summer to speak one word of Swedish. The inhibitions illustrated here pursued me until I reached college. There, in independent research in history, my Swedish—which in spite of myself I had never quite lost—became an asset, a unique if rusty tool that earned for me the respect of other students and the faculty, and I achieved a new sense of wholeness. I am sure this could have been accomplished much earlier had my town—where almost 60 per cent of the population is of Swedish descent—included Swedish in the curriculum and my advisers propelled me toward it. To me now, it seems ironic that I should have been able to read Vergil and Goethe and Heine and Moliere and Racine in the original, but have had to take Strindberg and Selma Lagerlöf in translation. I am sure that matter-of-fact acceptance of immigrant languages as one of the features of the rich American scene and their inclusion in an official course of study, whether a student studied them or not, would relieve many youngsters of a burden of complexes and set them on the road to

being sounder persons and so sounder Americans.

There is another advantage in this language program. Such courses can be a real liaison between the school and the home, can bring foreign-born mothers and fathers into co-operative work with the teachers, into PTA activity, and so into contact with the so-called American community. In this moment of global war which calls upon the full and united resources of the country, this would be no small achievement. I am also sure that the program, if handled with understanding and imagination, could incidentally return neat profit to the community, and reveal unsuspected color and richness hidden previously beneath the barrier of language and the drab fear of non-acceptance.

In the present world chaos, schools that are not yet awake to the language implications and potentials of a global war and a global peace cannot justly call themselves abreast of the times. There can be no language insularity of the world of the future, where it will be increasingly difficult to tell where domestic concerns end and international affairs begin.

High schools should get on the job and make use wherever possible of their own community backgrounds and resources for a purposeful language program.

• From the Immigrant and Negro Press •

A CYCLE COMPLETED

(An editorial from the September 26 Pittsburgh Courier, leading Negro weekly.)

THE Pittsburgh Courier's war correspondent, Edgar T. Rouzeau, and the first contingent of Negro combat troops have

arrived in Africa. This completes an historical cycle of deepest world significance. A little more than three hundred years ago the ancestors of these soldiers were torn from their homeland and brought to America helpless and in chains. Now

their descendants as free men return to the homeland with the weapons of western civilization to save it. For what?

The political attitude of the United States, England, Belgium, and all the allied nations toward Africa and the African colonies needs clarification. Negro Americans are deeply concerned in striking a blow for the freedom of Africans, and no sacrifice can be too great in this regard. But they are not interested in merely tightening the chains about African necks, or preserving the evils of colonial imperialism.

The only truly loyal part of the French empire to the allied cause has been French

Equatorial Africa. Will that loyalty be rewarded by guaranteeing French Equatorial Africa self-government after the war? Will Africans be admitted into the parliament of nations? Negroes are interested in a war for democracy only as it includes all colors, white, yellow, brown, black, and the shades between. A plain statement by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill that Africans by name are within the protection of the four freedoms of the Atlantic Charter will bring millions of black men unreservedly to the allied cause, and American Negro combat troops will be honored to lead the way.

THE FREE ITALY OF TOMORROW

(From a speech delivered by Gaetano Salvemini on Columbus Day in Boston and quoted in the October 23 issue of Nazioni Unite—Italian-language weekly of the Mazzini Society, New York City.)

THERE is blue sky over our heads if only we clearly realize and frankly admit that Mussolini and Italy are not, and never have been, one and the same thing. The Italian nation existed before Mussolini came into the world, and it will continue to exist after Mussolini is reduced to dust and ashes, and her sons will love her as their mother for all eternity. Governments pass. People remain. Military defeat will wipe out the fascist government. It will not wipe out the Italian nation as long as the Italian people are determined to show themselves worthy of survival.

"Let us not forget that Columbus' America will have a decisive say in the postwar settlement. The people of Italy will overcome the terrible ordeal inflicted upon them by Mussolini if America helps

them to save themselves. We can rely on the spirit of justice, generosity, and fair play of our adopted country. As American citizens we are entitled to demand that America, according to the principles of her Constitution, on the day of her victory dispenses justice to the Italians as well as to all other peoples.

"To perform this task we must first, and above all, throw overboard Mussolini and anyone who has acted as his agent in this country during these past twenty years. We must put ourselves in a position where we can be trusted by our fellow American citizens. We must wholeheartedly help America in her effort for victory.

"Thus when victory is won, we shall be able to say that if an Italian; Columbus, coming from Europe, discovered America, other Italians living in America helped America to discover, beyond Mussolini's black shirt, the visage of a true Italy, the free Italy of Garibaldi and Mazzini, the free Italy of tomorrow, again welcomed in the commonwealth of free nations."

• The Bookshelf •

CONDUCTED BY HENRY C. TRACY

ASPECTS OF THE DEMOCRATIC OFFENSIVE

That the long drive of a New World people through centuries of colonial enslavement, periods of anarchy, dictatorship, and hard-won political freedom—toward a democratic goal as yet unattainable in perfection—that this drive and its issue wherever it occurs is our vital concern and its problems ours comes home to us as we read John W. White's *Argentina* (Viking. \$3.75). Perhaps no recent book on a Latin American country can yield such a sense of clarification and enlightenment as this. It is the story of a people, struggling up from a state of neglect and oppression far worse than any known in our North American colonies, impelled by the same motives as ours, but lacking a homogeneous population at the start, and with only diffused awareness of the goal fought for. This account spares neither the unimaginative British agent nor the tactless and blundering American in dealings that call for disinterested friendship, consideration, and an almost clairvoyant understanding of a people. For want of these qualities, there are black marks on the record of America, both in its business and its diplomatic relations—marks that cannot be erased by "good-will" junkets, which are there detested. "Argentina is the one country in South America," says Mr. White, "with which we should have established a close and continuing friendship long ago." We failed. Instead we sold them jazz, radio, motor cars and our own life in cinematic distortions. We have yet to sell them our sincere regard and a common aspiration.

Philip Leonard Green, whose book on *Our Latin American Neighbors* was one

of the most readable of its kind, now disentangles for us in *Pan American Progress* (Hastings House. \$2) the mesh of political and cultural relations out of which a sound inter-American co-operative spirit is emerging. He warns us that the goal cannot be attained until the people themselves participate.

A striking essay by George Jaffin, entitled *New World Constitutional Harmony*, appears under the imprint of the Columbia Law Review, New York, \$1. Being non-technical in language, it should enlist the interest of our people, advocating as it does something broader than either an Anglo-American Union or a Pan-Hispanic; one that recognizes the common quality in all the New World constitutions, puts an end to a prevailing isolationist attitude in American constitutional thought, concedes that we too may learn from others, and paves the way for fuller co-operation.

Obstructing the progress of inter-American amity stands the old belief in absolute sovereignty of the nation. Emery Reves in *A Democratic Manifesto* (Random House. \$1.50) calls this the Golden Calf of the masses of our day. For it he would substitute a democratic conception of the nation, a re-interpretation, which would call for a concession of some part of that mystic and imaginary sovereignty nations pretend to exercise but cannot. Without sacrificing some element of its independence, no nation can share the benefit of an international organization that will enforce principles all are agreed on. Most cogent of all is Mr. Reves' argument that until we do away with this static con-

ception of independence and self-sufficiency (proved by this war to be wholly illusory), we shall have one war after another, as formerly.

The democratic spirit put to the ultimate test is vividly demonstrated in *The Raft* by Robert Trumbull (Holt. \$2.50), a tale of endurance and an outstanding story of adventure in the South Seas. Dixon from California, Aldrich from Missouri, Pastula, Polish-stock—three sailors—just common boys of the Navy air-arm, downed in a wide ocean—carry on with a common will, a common devotion, and a spirit that is beyond praise, through 34 days of burning sun, starvation, thirst, and ceaseless battering by wind and wave. A story of humor and resourcefulness, and of sharing—to the last ounce of energy—for a common end.

What's Your Name? by Louis Adamic (Harper. \$2.50) is a real contribution to the self-adjustment of persons with foreign-sounding names who need to "belong," to feel this land their home, yet who need also to retain their identity, bound up, as it is, almost inextricably with their old-country names. The problem is psychic as well as social, and failure to solve it may be tragic. Grasping all this, Mr. Adamic has written wisely and well. He sees that the problem is individual and that no blanket formula for its solution will apply. Good reading, with flashes of humor as well as deep insight.

Collected in one volume, a symposium

edited by Oscar I. Janowsky, *The American Jew* (Harper. \$2.50), explores various aspects of the subject—cultural, religious, economic, literary, philosophical, and educational—and discusses anti-Semitism, Zionism, and relations with the outside world. The result is illuminating. Dr. Janowsky himself writes the paper on historical background, as well as a conclusion summarizing the collective point of view, which yields this: The Jews of the United States constitute a spiritual-cultural group, with a validity capable of satisfying spiritual and cultural needs; but their heritage, being of the past, may require re-interpretation . . . without severance of its continuity. Also needed is recognition of the worldwide and universal character of this heritage and its expression in religion, folkways, music, literature, and the like—a view favorable toward Zionism as providing a homeland, even though the Jews are thoroughly imbued with the American spirit and completely identified with American culture and the American way of life. The authors believe "that American life is richer and more fruitful because of the variegated pattern of its many cultural strains. From this point of view, Jewish institutions, and the conceptions which render them meaningful, are an integral part of the American way of life." Marie Syrkin, whose work is familiar to COMMON GROUND readers, contributes a brilliant analysis and appraisal of the work of Jewish writers in all fields, with stress on their contributions to the modern American novel.

ONE HUMAN SPECIES

It is refreshing to find stated, in terms that everyone can understand, sound scientific grounds for declaring the racial chimera a myth. *Man's Most Dangerous*

Myth, by M. F. Ashley Montagu (Columbia University Press. \$2.25), so states them. A physical anthropologist, Dr. Montagu writes to clarify the reader's

mind on a subject that has become a world issue, a war pretext, a problem on the solution of which cultural civilization hangs. Alert readers will welcome the chance to know the basic facts which, since Mendel, have made absurd the whole fabric on which the traditional conception of race stands; a conception taken as gospel-true by all who indulge in race pride, supported by some anthropologists whose knowledge of genetics has lamentably lagged, and used as a basis for the most brutal philosophy the world has ever known. Here is a sound interpretation of the facts.

Acceptance of the racial myth, North and South, is implicit in *No Day of Triumph*, by J. Saunders Redding (Harper. \$3). Cleavage is found here even in the author's own family of mixed blood, their inclinations leaning to one side or the other of the supposed racial line. Mr. Redding traveled through the South, watched, interviewed, listened, to find what there is for the Negro in America to hope for, live for, and build on. Extremely well written, the book makes painful but salutary reading. "The Negro is only an equation in a problem of many equations, an equally important one of which is the white man," Mr. Redding decides finally. And again: "I had set out as Negro and American to find among my people those validities that proclaimed them and me men. And I think I found them . . . intangibles in the scale of human values. They are, unmistakably, integrity of spirit, love of freedom, courage, patience, hope."

Shadows there are on our land, deep ones, but in Sam Byrd's *Small Town South* (Houghton Mifflin. \$2.75) we come out into the sunny freshness of a North Carolina town on a spring morning. "Mrs. Byrd's little boy has come home," after years behind the footlights on a Broadway stage. He sees the South with kindness and humor, as a grown man must see the things he loved as a child. Prob-

lems? They do not upset him. And if we could all see our world intuitively and unprejudiced as very young children do, perhaps there would be no "race problem" after all. None is stressed in Virginia Moore's *Virginia Is a State of Mind* (Dutton. \$3), whose title is a thesis Miss Moore supports by blowing on the lore stored in book and legend till it lifts out of its long sleep.

If the human species is one, what about the regional variations? What is a Texan? *Texas: a World in Itself*, George Sessions Perry calls his latest book (Whittlesey House. \$2.75). The state was, he explains, populated originally by "Texians" who really did seem a race apart. (Indians and Mexicans so rated them, and feared them as they did not fear the tamer *Americano*.) But that vanished land of turbulent, hell-bent-for-leather living was also a "state of mind." Now the "Texian" is gone. But space remains, and bigness, and the Texan still does things in a big way in a vast and varied domain.

Among many good things in Wallace Stegner's *Mormon Country* (Duell, Sloan & Pearce. \$3), one learns how a community can be conditioned by an idea into fantastic behaviors, how a man can be made into an outlaw by the most admirable of his qualities, how wonders can be performed by a stolid, unimaginative people, and godliness leveled off to institutional regularity, how the human spirit can burst like a rocket into colorful stars—heroes, bandits, scientists, artists, eccentrics—and all from the same stock, the human species. Finns, Swedes, Serbs, Austrians, Yugoslavs, Greeks, Italians, Armenians, Albanians, Chinese, Koreans, Mexicans—all the variety of Americans are in the picture. Latest of the American Folkways series, this book, in its raciness and flavor, enhances the good fame of that undertaking.

With *The Plenty of Pennsylvania* (Kin-

sey. \$3.50), Cornelius Weygandt rounds out a fine record of writings on things human and American. Despite efforts of certain sections of the state to be "different,"

Pennsylvanians have generally regarded themselves as one people, proud of accomplishments in thrift, arts, crafts, godliness, and the creation of a life worth living.

THE AMERICAN SPIRIT IN FICTION

If we say that novelists have moved to the front lines, manned their batteries, and joined battle with the common enemy, it does not mean that fiction has become propaganda in 1942. But it does mean that our writers are keenly aware of major issues in the world struggle and are not side-stepping them.

All-American by John R. Tunis (Harcourt Brace. \$2), for instance, at first sight may seem to be the conventional boys' football yarn. But in many ways it is one of the most important books of the season in the field of better human relations. Here are high school and private school youngsters meeting up with prejudice against Negro and Jew, and resolving those prejudices through the simple, straightforward drive of fairness, of team-spirit. The moral never intrudes; the action is fast-moving as in any good sports story. But the implications are unmistakable for every reader, young or old. This is a book that should be in every public and school library in the country and in every boy's private collection.

For quality, bite, vigor, take *Gentleman Ranker* by John Jennings (Reynal & Hitchcock. \$2.75). Here is a novel every bit as mordant as the classic *Tom Jones*, done in the same sound tradition, and with added pungency and point. "Gentleman Trent," moneyed idler of the London clubs, tripped up by fate, finds himself penniless and a common soldier in the redcoat division of Braddock's "punitive" army of the frontier. As story, this tale holds the reader with a bulldog grip, but,

beyond that, it shows how an English snob may learn by hard contacts and deserved disasters to his pride, what the American spirit is. A grand book. (Male readers attend!)

In *The Valley of Decision* (Scribners. \$3) Marcia Davenport has written a powerful yet sensitive novel. It is a portrait of family, of character, of dramatic conflict centering in the clashing interests of men and things amid the smoke and flame of Pittsburgh's giant industry. Here are men of steel and stubborn will; here is courage, cowardice, violence. Here also is Mary Rafferty, unique and unforgettable. This novel pays fine tribute to the Czech character, not only as functioning among the mill workers, but as developing into the finest talent, heroism, and self-sacrificing devotion.

Two successful novels deal with the issue that tore our land apart in the 1860s and, despite emancipation, remains unsolved. Philip Van Doren Stern's *The Drums of Morning* (Doubleday Doran. \$3) takes it from a Northern (Abolitionist) angle; James Street's *Tap Roots* (Dial Press. \$2.75), briefly reviewed in our last issue, from the viewpoint of an anti-slavery faction in the South.

In Naomi Lane Babson's New England story, *Look Down From Heaven* (Reynal & Hitchcock. \$2.50), it is class more than race which makes the barrier. But Mary, of Finnish stock, wins out against caste and snobbery by her own self-reliant spirit. This is a good story of the push up

from lowly status of a new-stock character of fine spirit. From the fresh pen of Aben Kandel we get *The Stones Begin to Dance* (Duell, Sloan & Pearce. \$2), with folk of many creeds, backgrounds, origins, in the Williamsburg Bridge district of New York City, drawn together by common adversity and led by a wise old man whose feelings are deep and sensitive. Alice Tisdale Hobart's *The Cup and the Sword* (Bobbs-Merrill. \$2.75) opens a vista on the wine country of California, where pride in the family name (French, this time), wealth, and fine vintages pretty well dominate the household. The younger members have serious ordeals to go through before they find spiritual orientation.

In his newest book, *Coarse Gold* (Dutton. \$2.50), Edwin Corle presses the quest he has pursued in the desert for years, to something like a final conclusion. From long familiarity with old mining towns, with night, silence, and solitude, his keen perceptiveness has drawn something calming and satisfying to a harried and confused human spirit. His novel gives the key to this. But there is high drama, too, in the rehabilitation of a ghost town with the discovery of tungsten. A strangely stirring book.

As a contrast, Albert Halper's *Little People* (Harper. \$2.50) seem caged and cagey, trapped more by Sutton's emporium, where they work, than by their own egos. But there is spirit there, at least in Oscar Breslin, the hatter.

From beyond the bounds of these States also comes fiction that reveals the pain and turmoil of today's world. Ignazio Silone in *The Seed Beneath the Snow* (Harper. \$2.75) surpasses his *Bread and Wine*, fine as it was in depth and texture. He writes here of the decay of moral health and every human value in totalitarian Italy, in whose lonely and barren mountain country a young idealist, fleeing persecution, finds "the seed beneath the snow."

In *Hostages* (Putnam. \$2.50), Stefan Heym writes of Prague under the Gestapo, and burns into our consciousness, as no mere factual account can do, what this war means to others and what it bodes for us, unless we win.

Fiesta in November, edited by Angel Flores and Dudley Poore (Houghton Mifflin. \$3), is a collection of 18 novellettes and short stories from Latin American literature. Selected from the best work of living authors, some well-known, some obscure, these stories reveal intimate, human aspects of a life that journalists and students of social problems do not see and could not report in any case. The title story shows us the world of wealth and power in an Argentine city, but for the most part the scenes of these plotless stories are set against a background of open weather in which common folk, among them Afro-Indians, maintain a ceaseless struggle for a meager existence, menaced by a pitiless nature and the treachery of man.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

People of Poros by Peter Gray (Whittlesey House. \$3) is his log of a two years' sojourn on Poros Island, near Piraeus, among village Greeks, by whose appealing

traits and ways he is enchanted. In *Days of Ofelia* (Houghton Mifflin. \$2.75) Gertrude Diamant, using as leverage the child who became her maid, lifts the lid that

COMMON GROUND

conceals from casual travelers the intimate folk life of Mexico. *Negroes in Brazil* by Donald Pierson (University of Chicago Press. \$4.50) belongs to a sociological series. Because of today's extraordinary interest in race problems and relations, Brazil's almost effortless solution of these issues may appeal to a wide audience. This account is non-technical in treatment, illuminating the historical, social, and controversial aspects of the subject. Oliver LaFarge edits *The Changing Indian* (University of Oklahoma Press. \$2), a symposium arranged by the American Association on Indian Affairs. A wide range of subjects treated covers cultural, economic, social, and educational progress and needs. Dr. Harry Carlos DeVighne's *The Time of My Life* (Lippincott. \$3), while strictly autobiography, carries much first-hand information about the Indians of Alaska and the whites of the frontier.

Rebels and Gentlemen by Carl and Jessica Bridenbaugh (Reynal & Hitchcock. \$3.50) is an extremely well-presented account of Philadelphians—people and leaders—in pre-Revolutionary days. The town was a breeding ground for enlightened and intelligent citizens. Here we see the rise of a people's education as against that for rich men's sons only, and as a factor in the success of the American Revolution. Literature, the arts, medicine, science, and club life are covered.

Harold Sinclair's *The Port of New Orleans* (Doubleday Doran. \$3.50) is all that an historic portrait of a city should be. The Spanish origins of the town, the French occupation, American purchase, foreign relations, internal dramas, characters, rulers, people, varied strains of population and their interrelations are handled never tediously, but in a mode of wise indirection that allows a reader to make the implications for himself.

Statement of the Ownership, Management, Etc.

REQUIRED BY THE ACTS OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AND MARCH 3, 1933

OF COMMON GROUND, published quarterly at New York, New York, for October 1, 1942.

State of New York }
County of New York } ss.

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared M. Margaret Anderson, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the Editor of Common Ground and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are: Publisher, Common Council for American Unity, Incorporated, 222 Fourth Avenue, New York, N.Y. Editor, M. Margaret Anderson

222 Fourth Avenue, New York, N.Y.
Business Manager, Paul Laval
222 Fourth Avenue, New York, N.Y.

2. That the owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a firm, company, or other unincorporated concern, its name and address, as well as those of each individual member, must be given.)

COMMON COUNCIL FOR AMERICAN UNITY, INCORPORATED, New York, N.Y., a membership corporation. Chairman: Nicholas Kelley; Vice-chairmen: John Palmer Gavit and Will Irwin; Treasurer: Eliot D. Pratt; Executive Director: Read Lewis.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.)

None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by her.

M. MARGARET ANDERSON, Editor.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1st day of October, 1942.

[Seal.]

HANNY L. COHRSEN,
Notary Public.

(My commission expires March 30, 1943.)

BOOKS

The Real Italians

By COUNT CARLO SPORZA

"This vindication of the common man, whose spirit is alien to a regime now foisted upon him, is heartening, coming as it does from a diplomat who knows his people as they are today and in a setting of history."—*Common Ground*.

"There is no page that does not sparkle with flashes of insight and cogent remarks that give the lie to much of the misinformation current on the nature of the Italian people."—Gaetano Salvemini in the *Nation*.

\$2.00

Man's Most Dangerous Myth

The Fallacy of Race

By M. F. ASHLEY MONTAGU

"In a series of chapters packed with relevant and intelligible scientific data, the author shows the complete unreality of the racial concept as generally understood."—*Christian Century*.

"... a brilliant attack on the prevailing contention that humanity is divided into various races with different levels of intelligence and abilities ... carefully worked out from the viewpoint of the various sciences."—*Desert News*.

\$2.25

Guide for the Study of American Social Problems

An outline and bibliography for the use of study groups. \$1.00

Race, Reason and Rubbish

A Primer of Race Biology
By Gunnar Dahlberg. \$2.25

Publications of the

Common Council For American Unity

COMMON GROUND—back issues. Copies of the first nine issues of *COMMON GROUND*—Autumn 1940 through Autumn 1942—are still available and may be had for the special price of three for \$1.00 or four for \$1.25. Bound volumes (four issues) are available at \$2.85 each.

Pearl Buck Speaks for Democracy. A plea by one of America's foremost women writers in behalf of 12,000,000 colored Americans. Single copy free; in lots, three cents each.

Foreign Festival Customs. An especially useful handbook for groups planning Christmas or other holiday programs. Lists Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, and Harvest customs in foreign countries as well as recipes for typical nationality dishes. Mimeographed. 54 pages. 50 cents.

Planning a Folk Festival. Specimen programs and bibliographies. Mimeographed. 39 pages. 25 cents.

*Send for complete list
of Council publications*

COMMON COUNCIL FOR
AMERICAN UNITY

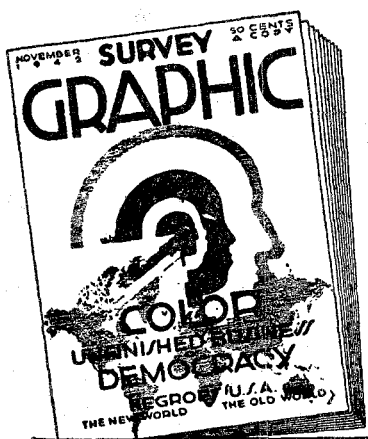
222 Fourth Ave., New York City

Columbia University Press

TO UNDERSTAND TODAY'S CRISIS IN RACE RELATIONS . .

FIND your way about in a world predominantly non-white by reading **COLOR: UNFINISHED BUSINESS OF DEMOCRACY**, special number of *Survey Graphic* for November.

Part One centers on the problems of Negroes, U.S.A. in wartime America—Part Two on the Challenge of Color in the New



World and the Old. In 128 pages of maps, drawings, photographs and text, twenty-three journalists, scientists, artists, spokesmen for races and regions, come to grips with race issues, discrimination, trends in the South, Mexico and its Indians, Brazil and its race equality, the Pacific basin and the future, India, colonialism, China, and other controversial, timely issues.

The distinguished contributors include Pearl Buck, Lin Yutang, Herbert Agar, K. O. Mbadiwe, Adolf A. Berle, Jr., Jonathan Daniels, Syud Hossain, Alain Locke, Ezequiel Padilla, A. Philip Randolph, Walter White.

Survey Graphic is a monthly magazine published by a non-partisan, non-profit educational society now in its thirtieth year. Special numbers are the spearheads of our work. The Calling America Series of which this is the seventh number, has already achieved a circulation of a third of a million copies.

Educators, business executives, public officials, women's leaders, social workers—people who deal today with what is in prospect tomorrow—have long looked to us for guidance, for they know, as *Newsweek* has stated: "*Survey Graphic* headings might be mistaken for headlines in tomorrow's papers."

The regular price of *Survey Graphic* is \$3 a year. To introduce it to logical new readers, however, we offer the next—

6 MONTHS FOR ONLY \$1
(one third reduction)

Subscriptions will include **COLOR: UNFINISHED BUSINESS OF DEMOCRACY** as long as copies are available. To make sure you get yours, order today!

SURVEY GRAPHIC—112 E. 19th St., New York

For the enclosed dollar send me six months of *Survey Graphic* including **COLOR: UNFINISHED BUSINESS OF DEMOCRACY**.

Name

Address

CG



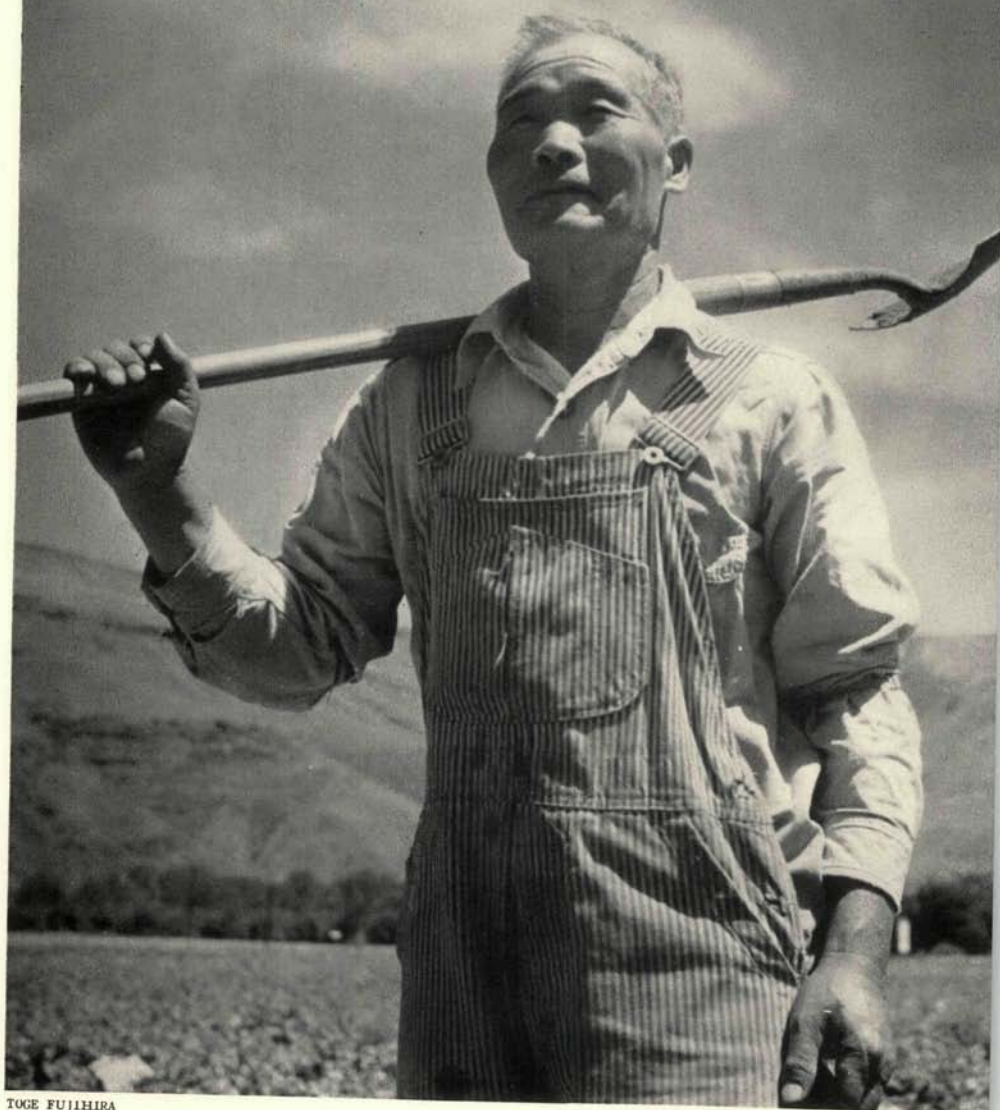
DELANO—FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Polish Americans—Connecticu



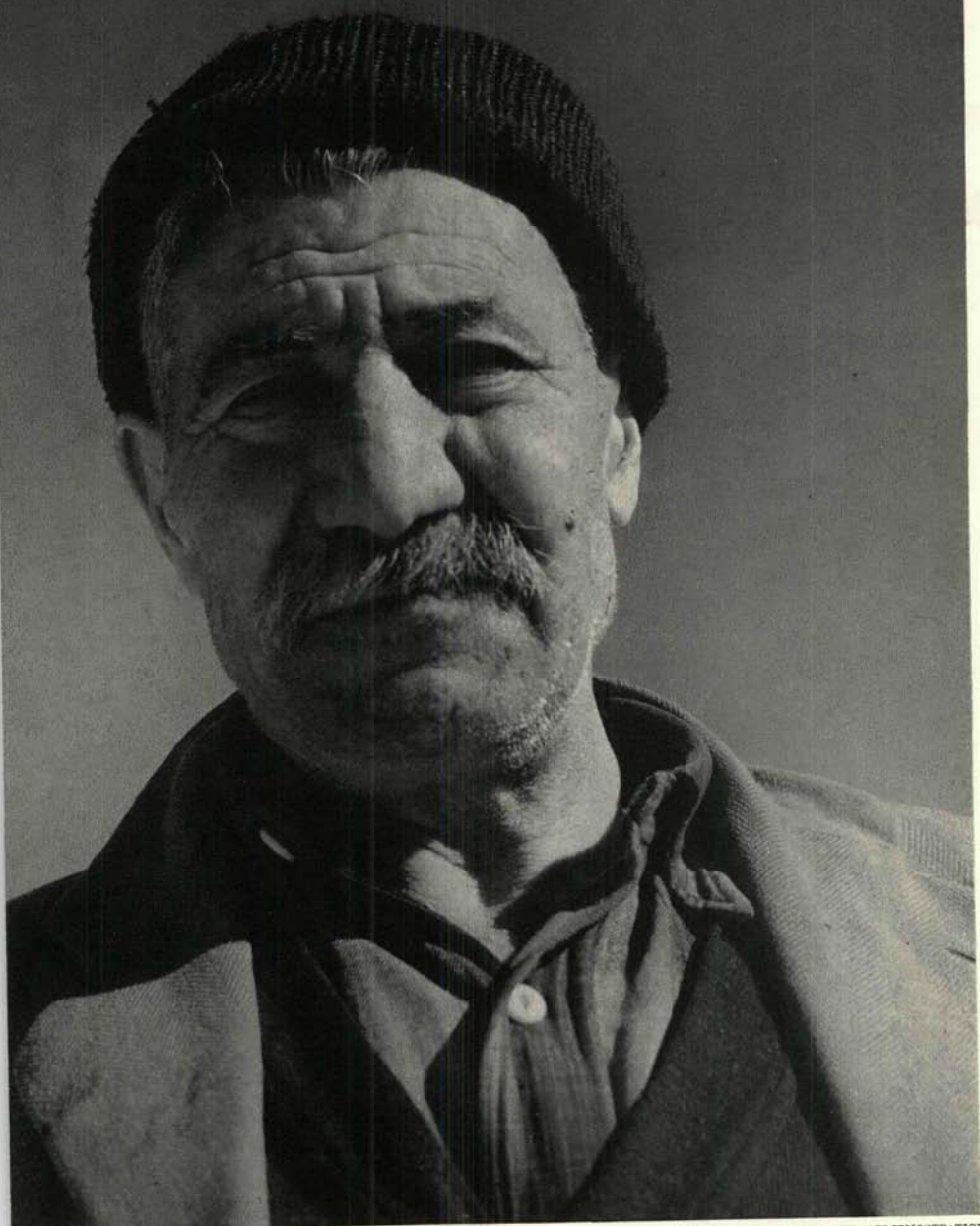
ROTHSTEIN—FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Old-stock—Washington



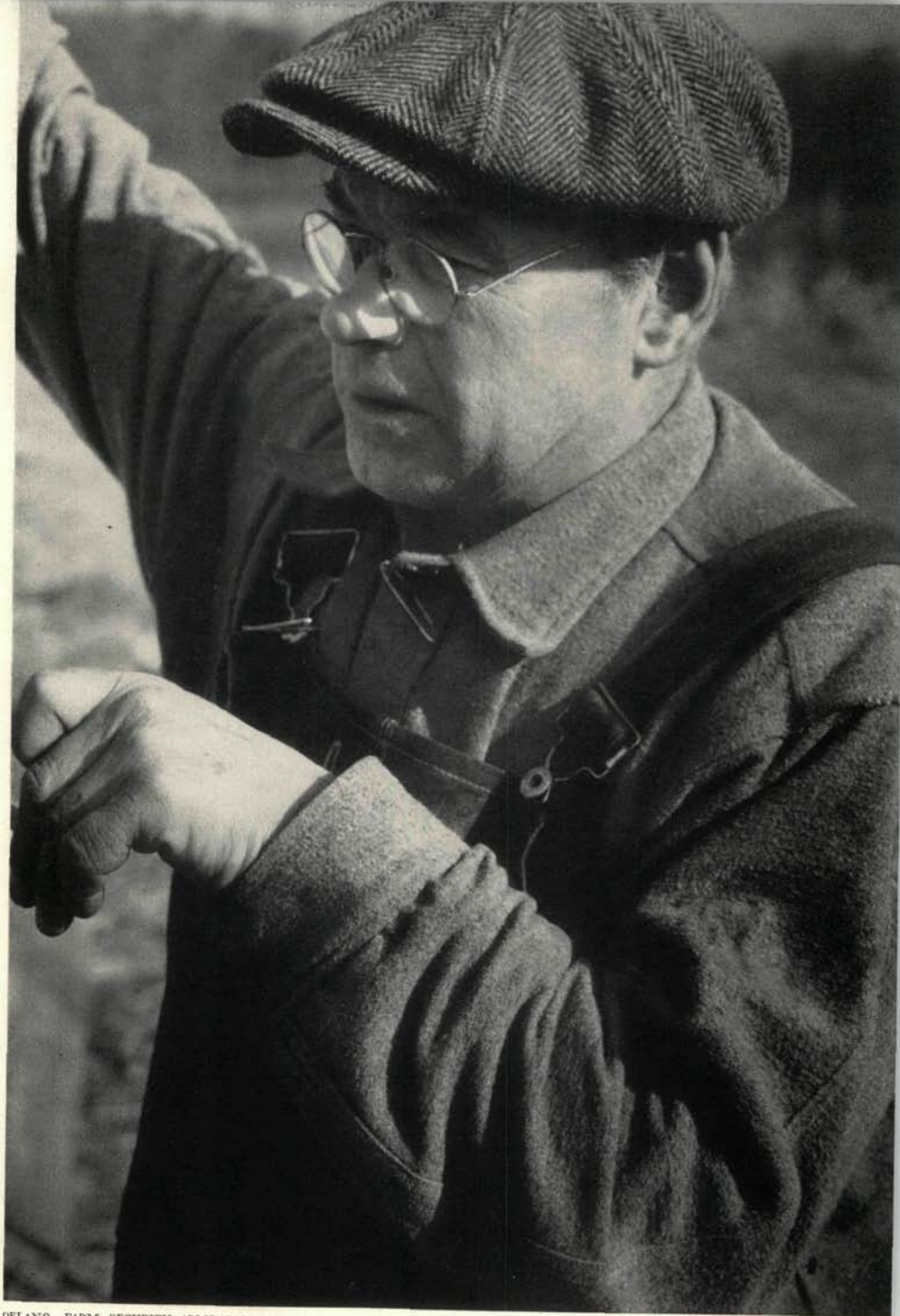
TOKE FUJIHIRA

Japanese American—California



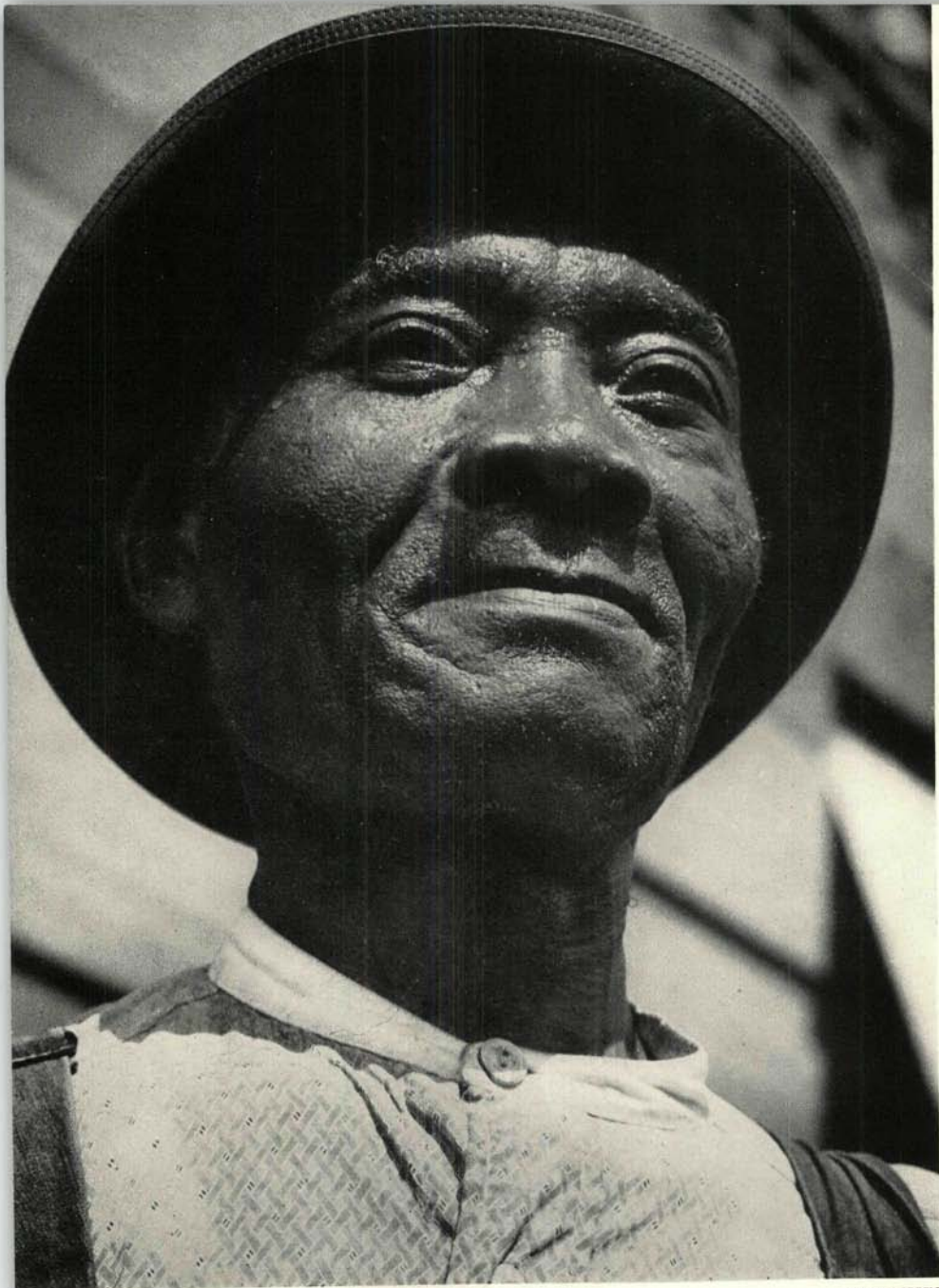
DELANO—FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

New England—Armenian . . .



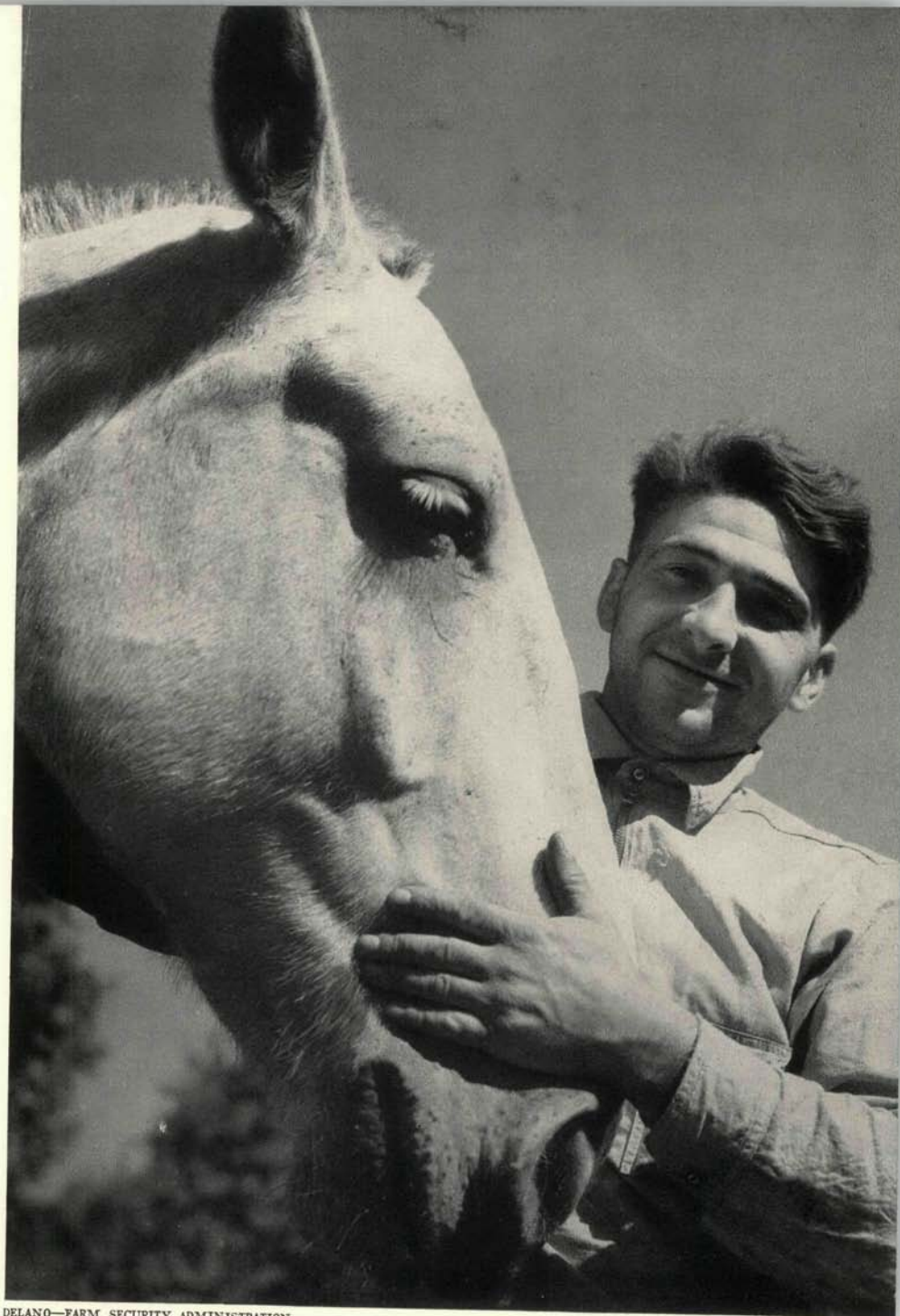
DELANO—FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

... and Finnish Descer



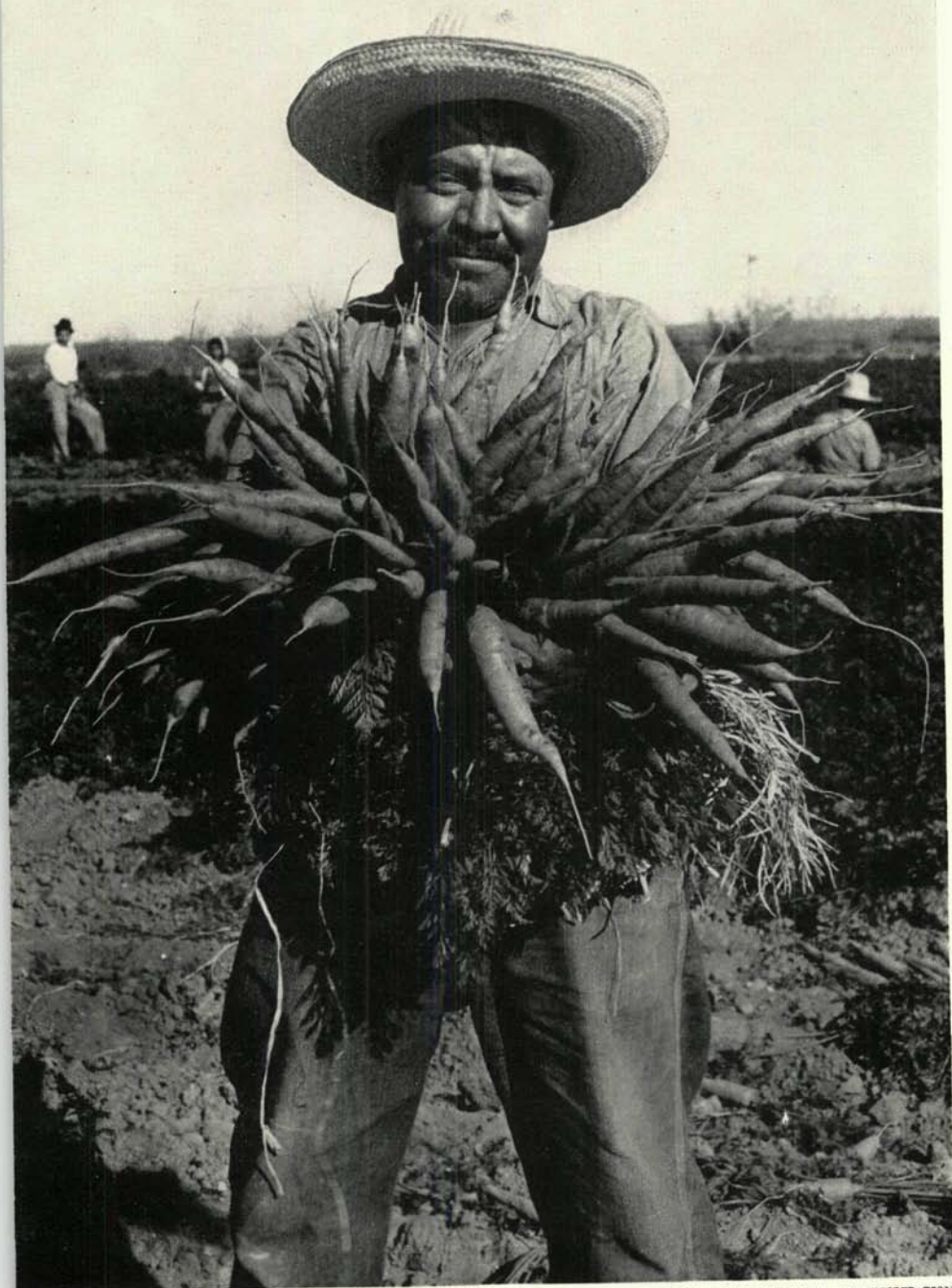
DAVID ROBBINS

Negro—Alabama



DELANO—FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Italian American—Connecticut



LEE—FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Of Mexican Stock—Texas